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The University of Montana

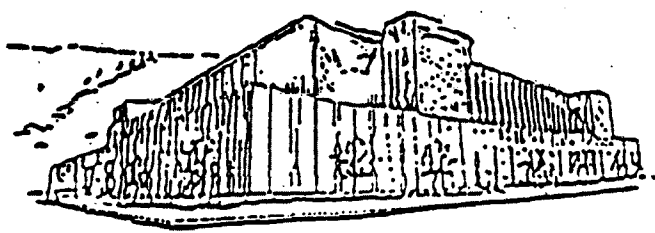
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DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE HUTTERITES:
THE RACIALIZATION OF A RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY IN RURAL
MONTANA

by

Susan Huntley

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts in Anthropology

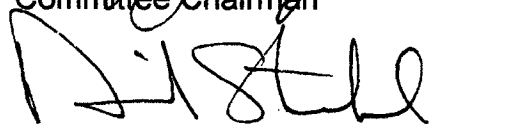
The University of Montana - Missoula

2000

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Huntley, Susan

M. A., May 2000

Anthropology

Discrimination Against The Hutterites: The Racialization of a Religious Community in Rural Montana

Chairman: Gregory R. Campbell, Ph.D.



The research question is whether or not Hutterite colonies in rural Montana are subject to biases, prejudice, and the spread of false rumors based on their religious views, ethnicity, dedication to religion, and culture. The goal was to find people with this anti-Hutterite point of view and explain why they have these views, how they are manifested, and how the Hutterites feel about them.

Methodology included historical literary research, interviews, questionnaires, telephone conversations, and the study of ethnicity and religious discrimination theory. Field work was conducted in three counties in rural Montana. Visitation with Hutterites and non-Hutterites was included.

Research and communications indicated that there are biases toward Hutterites in rural Montana, and they are mostly on an economic basis. The current economic situation of Montana and the collapse of farms in America in general creates non-Hutterites to be suspicious of Hutterites' farming successes. Rural Montana business owners and farmers often blame the Hutterites for the collapse of the local economy, rationalizing the Hutterite communal wealth with underhanded business practices. The Hutterites, after a long history of religious persecution that in America dates back to World War I, are racialized or seen as non-white. This racialization is based almost completely on economics, so this paper has Marxian undertones.

∞ ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ∞

With Special Thanks:

*To Greg Campbell for his sharpness, wit, and intelligence.
To Tobie Weist for giving an unknown grad. student a chance.
And most of all, to Kyle Wright for everything,
including being a wonderful field assistant.*

∞ TABLE OF CONTENTS ∞

INTRODUCTION	Page 1
CHAPTER 1: Situating the Hutterite: Historical and Ethnographic Background	Page 5
CHAPTER 2: Fieldwork and Economic Blame	Page 30
CHAPTER 3: Rumors, Prejudices and Criticisms From the Periphery, From 1914 to the Present	Page 50
CHAPTER 4: Ethnicity and Racializing Religion; The Hutterites' Unique Situation	Page 71
CONCLUSION	Page 92
REFERENCES	Page 98

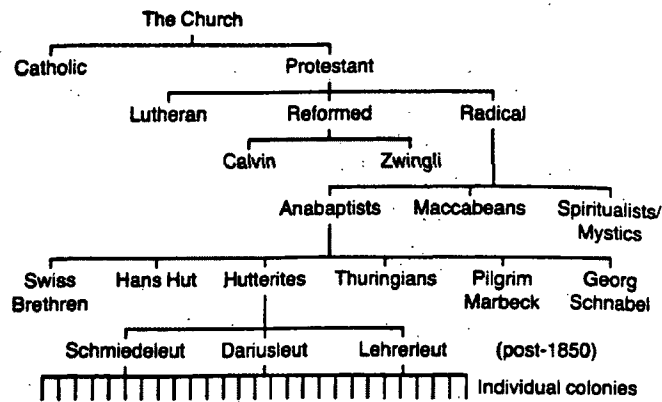
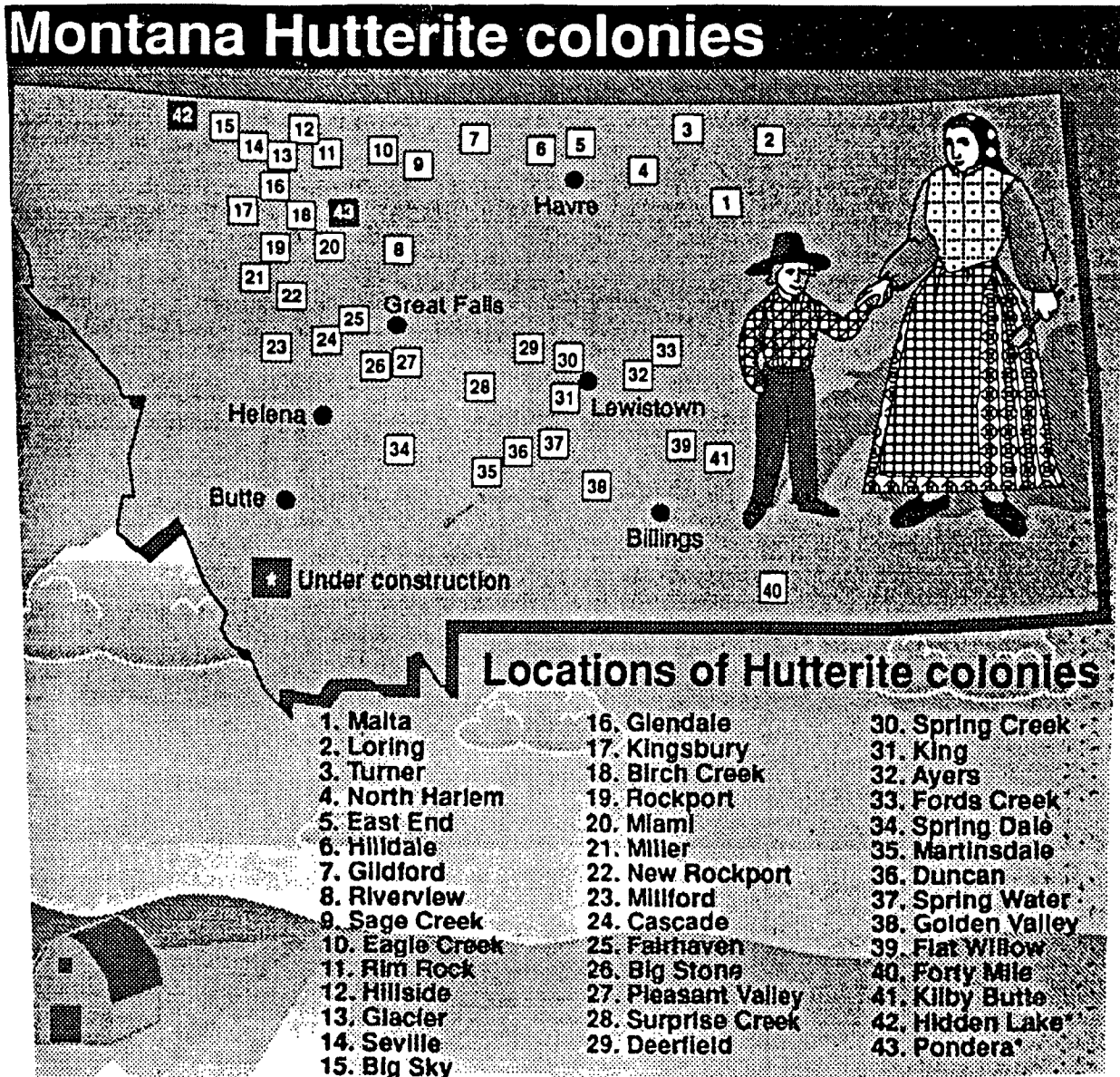


Figure 4.1: Origins and development of the Hutterites*

(Shenker 1986: Figure 4.1)



(Great Falls Tribune, November, 1992)

∞ | INTRODUCTION ∞

The research of this paper is designed to study Hutterite colonies in Montana communities, and to understand why these colonies are the victims of biases, prejudice, criticism, and rumors. Sometimes, they are also the target of hate crimes, like the 1998 arson fire at the new Camrose Colony near Shelby. The study focuses on local neighbors of Hutterites and asks them why they feel the way they do about the Hutterites. It is my belief that Hutterites are not considered to be Americans, and are not part of the majority ethnicity. Therefore, they are racialized as a white (in the popular sense of the word), religious, ethnic group of their own, seen to have no ties with the United States or to Montana.

My methods are a combination of historical research, personal communication through interviews, questionnaires and basic ethnographic field work, and a study of theory of ethnicity and racialization of religious groups. I take the position that prejudice is unavoidable, that the struggling non-Hutterite Montana farmers and the poor local economy necessitate that scapegoats be made out of the Hutterites. The literature shows that there are many instances of "whites" being treated as minorities in both the ethnic and religious realms, specifically in the cases of Jews in Germany and Irish Catholics in Ireland.

Hutterites combine both of these, along with a difference of language and culture, making them very difficult to accept for traditional, patriotic, homogeneous, rural Montana communities.

It is my contention that the biases against the Hutterites are mainly economical, and not personal attacks. Non-Hutterite Montanans see communal living as going against the "American Dream", and in fact, Hutterites are seen as being un-American and Communist, a feeling that lingers on from World War I and the fear that they would be loyal to their German homeland.

Capitalism is about individual achievement. This makes understanding the Hutterites' communal lives even more difficult for some. The American Dream is to make money and own property; we measure success with material wealth. Outsiders measure colonies this way, though Hutterites are not capitalists. The intent of the colonies is not to show off their wealth, though some would argue that is exactly what they are doing. While they are a successful capitalist social group, they do not practice capitalism, and they do not measure success materially. They serve God, and disavow owning personal property, cars, jewelry, televisions, radios, and so on. It is for this reason they are misunderstood, seen as underhanded and evil. Hutterites are blamed locally for failing farms and businesses. They, like many minorities, are held to a higher standard.

Often accused of taking over Montana, the Hutterites have approximately fifty-two colonies and 5,000 brethren in the state. Questions arise as to what should be taught in their schools, what taxes they should pay, and why they get

what is seen as preferential treatment by the Government. Patriotic nationalists fear them the most, and see them as a threat to democracy, capitalism, and free enterprise. Some Montanans feel the Hutterites are “invading”, rapidly expanding, or taking over the state.

It is important to note that there are three types of Hutterites. The Schmiedeleuts do not reside in Montana, the Dariusleut live around Lewistown and Malta, and the Lehrerleut live in the Great Falls, I-15 area. It is the Lehrerleut colonies that are the focus of this paper. Each group has separate beliefs from the other two, and therefore are quite different. To compare colonies, you must compare colonies within the same branch, as some branches are more traditional, while others are more liberal.

Chapter One gives an historical and ethnographic background to the Hutterite story. It is important to understand that this group has 500 years of history and maintains its ancient life ways purposefully and very successfully. Chapter Two is based on my ethnographic field work - interviews, questionnaires and visitations. It is in this chapter that I discuss the mentality of “anti-Hutterite people”; how they feel and what they believe. Much of this chapter was written from verbal accounts of what I heard locally, at work or in day to day conversation. Chapter Three explores the biases, rumors and criticisms that float around Montana and have since 1917. Chapter Four is devoted to the theory of ethnicity, the racialization of religious groups, and how the Hutterites came to bare the brunt of angry farmers in Montana. This is followed by a brief summary and conclusion.

Before I continue, I would like to share a passage which best sums up the Hutterite place in American society:

The chosen ones don't send their children to public schools, are not interested in public community life, and don't become members of the Lion's Club or the hockey or curling association. They consume far too little, and when they need something, they don't buy it at the local stores but drive 60 miles...in order to get it cheaper from a wholesale dealer. The result: Community life falters, the schools must close due to a lack of students, the stores go bankrupt, and the town dies. And everything is the Hutterites' fault (Holzach 1993:147).

While this passage was written tongue-in-cheek by a Canadian Hutterite, it accurately describes what many local Montana farmers and shop owners feel about their neighboring Hutterite colonies. In this paper, I look at why.

CHAPTER ONE

∞ SITUATING THE HUTTERITE: HISTORICAL AND ETHNOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND ∞

I. Five Hundred Years of History

The Hutterites have a long and international history, as well as a very interesting ethnography. Like the Amish and the Mennonites, they are Anabaptists, or radical Protestants, and Hutteritism was introduced as an alternative to Mennonitism. The Hutterites are radical biblicists, who believe that the Scriptures are the final authority. "Only what was explicitly commanded in Scripture or demonstrated by its examples should be normative for the Christian Congregation." (Packull 1995:16) Their goal was to form "the most nearly perfect embodiment of New Testament principles since the days of the Apostles". (Hillerbrand, 1993, as cited in Packull 1995:418)

Hutterites based their original religion on the Reformation and the New Testament, mixing the past and the present. In 1525, they created two signature tenets of Hutterian life: adult baptism and communal life, which shares all goods. These Anabaptists wanted to be separate from the "in vogue" theological dogma

of the Reformation, and stood apart from the closely related Mennonites in these ways. The Swiss, South German, Austrian and Moravian Anabaptists shared the community of goods in the 1500's, but only the Hutterites maintain this model to this day. Because of this unique way of life, they were victims of 16th Century religious oppression, and as I will argue in this paper, are still victims of prejudice today.

The ideal life, in the Hutterites' original view, is that all members, or brethren, are equal. Christ was God's will to humankind. Starting in 1527, three separate surviving orders can be traced directly to today's Hutterites. They are: the Congregational Order, or the Swiss Order; the Common Order; and the Church Discipline (also known as The Discipline), or Hutterites. The Discipline was based on the original work, "The Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren", written in 1529, though the Hutterite inception is dated to 1525. The main tenets of The Discipline are still strictly adhered to today: the admonition to meet frequently, to begin each meeting with prayer, to not waste time with idle chatter, to live fully surrendered to the will of God, to live fully in brotherly love (loving yourself and each other).

These German-speaking Anabaptists were persecuted during the religious oppression of Archduke Ferdinand I (1503-1564) who took over all the territories listed below. Anabaptism was outlawed in Zurich on January 18th, 1525. In December, 1526, the death penalty was added as punishment for this 'heresy'. Hutterites and other Anabaptists fled on foot to Moravia, a former province in central Czechoslovakia, in 1527. Those who were caught on foot while fleeing

were imprisoned in castle dungeons. (Gross 1980:136) "From 1527 on, Moravia became the 'promised land' for persecuted Anabaptists from Switzerland, the Rhineland, Palatinate, Swabi, Hesse, Franconia, Bavaria, Upper and Lower Austria, Tyrol and Silesia." (Packull 1995:54)

During this time, Anabaptists were persecuted by Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, Polish Brethren, and Swiss Brethren. Ferdinand was threatened by the Turkish during the Thirty Years War, and a quiet fell over Moravia from 1537-1545. During this time, Moravian Lords refused Ferdinand's orders to dismantle Anabaptist communities in order to secure the Catholic Reformation. Ferdinand's retaliation created a diaspora, or forced movement of a people, as Anabaptists fled to Hungary and Slovakia to avoid execution, torture and prison. Amazingly, the Hutterites built *lochy* during this time - subterranean tunnels and caves in which to hide themselves and their literature. The Hutterites were only one of many groups to flee during this time (such as the Philipites and the Gabrielites), but they were the only group practicing the community of goods that still survives today.

During Ferdinand's reign, the Hutterian leader Jacob Hutter remained firm in his religious beliefs, even as his sister and teachers were murdered. In March of 1536, he was arrested, tried, frozen, thawed, beaten, cut, had brandy poured on him and was then set on fire as Catholic priests exorcised him. Now a legend in Hutterite history, he is compared with Christ, never faltering in his beliefs, dying for others. His wife Katherine did the same. Also executed during the late 1530's were Hutterite teachers, the first schoolmaster Jeronimus Kals, and many other

Hutterite families, including women and children. The Hutterites fled from Hungary to Russia in 1760, where they would remain only four years. It is interesting to note that even during their persecution, Hutterite pottery was known as being so beautiful, even Ferdinand purchased it.

In 1874, the Hutterites began fleeing to America from their last exile in what is now Russia in search of religious freedom, as Russian was declared the only language that could be spoken there. By 1879, every surviving Hutterite (1,265 in total) had settled in South Dakota. Half of them proceeded to join the Mennonites who had already settled in the United States. The other half are the direct descendants of the Hutterites who live here today. Their dialect and dress remains the same as it was almost 500 years ago. Now I want to focus on what make the Hutterites so unique.

II. Ethnographic Profile

The Hutterites reside in the rural Great Plains in the northern region of the U. S., practicing *guetergemeinschaft*, or a community of goods. Each community, or colony, has a cluster of buildings on its grounds. This includes three or four long, motel-like houses which are divided into family units. There are no public roads which pass through a colony, as all lands are privately owned. Each colony has a large kitchen and dining hall in its center, a school, barns, shops and sheds. It is on these colonies that the Hutterian brothers and sisters practice their communal living, where they believe salvation lies. Their ethos is owning all things in common, their environment a very successful farming community. They

believe they were put on earth to practice *gelassenheit*, or a state of mind of submission to the will of God. (Peter 1987:2) Hutterites have removed themselves from mass society, believing that only their commune separates them from others. Every member believes in non-violence and pacifism, living a very simple life, adult baptism for believers, and that they are a separate ethnic group.

Three subgroups or denominations of Hutterites have descended from the three founding communities in South Dakota. Each of these its their own disciplines, and the subgroups do not intermarry. The Schmiedeleut are now only in Manitoba, South Dakota, North Dakota and Minnesota. The Lehreleut are a smaller group, and finally the Dariusleut reside in Saskatchewan, Montana, Washington, Alberta, and British Columbia. Not all colonies are identical, and they do not want to be stereotyped. You cannot assume that if you've seen one, you've seen them all, as they say. However, they do share many common characteristics. Today, there are 30,000 Hutterites in total, residing in over 300 colonies in the U. S. and Canada. (I will discuss their migration from South Dakota to Canada and Montana further in the next chapters.)

Basic facets of Hutterite life that are true to all colonies involve beliefs and daily activities. All the men wear black cloth jackets, trousers, suspenders, wide-brimmed preachers hats and beards if they are married, while the women wear colorful "longskirts" that fall to the ground, aprons and polka-dot kerchiefs. Homes include only a bed, shelf, table and chairs, couch, cupboard, chest, clock, footstool, sewing machine and spinning wheel. Bells are rung during many points of the day, telling Brethren when to go where. There is a bell to wake up, a bell

to go to breakfast, a bell for school, and so on, although this practice may die out as the Hutterites begin to keep clocks in their homes. All members speak an old German which is considered Tyrolese German; it is similar to that spoken in Austria. This language is oral and unwritten and is used at home. Some of their vocabulary also reflects the time they spent fleeing religious persecution, with bits of Romanian, English, Slavic, Ukraine. High (or regular) German is spoken at school and in church. The children, though born in the U. S., have German accents and learn German as their first language. German is taught first, and English after the age of six. This is an important way for Hutterites to remain separate from Americans and our popular culture, though they do speak excellent English.

Each colony has between sixty and 140 members. When they grow larger than this, they fission into new colonies which are created with money from the overgrown colony. Music, art and writing are not encouraged on the colonies, and in some they are even forbidden, because "those practices are the ways of the world". (Hofer, 1991:13) Hutterites are very conservative and many of their ways (such as clothing) can be traced directly to the first *bruderhof* (or place of brethren) in Austerlitz, Austria. The twenty-eight thousand members in the U. S. today can be traced directly to these Austrian descendants, the eighteen families who escaped Hungary to Russia in 1760. They own no private property, although recently younger members have been known to sneak in radios and the like, have no public schools, are strongly attached to their history and historical

materials, and in being so create a strong solidarity. Hutterites are admittedly opposed to new ways of thinking, and consider themselves peaceful isolationists.

These Old World people have not really changed much since the 1500s. Their mother colony in Bon Homme, South Dakota, remains a figure in their history, true to its original state. In the Hutterite way, the *weltgeist*, or spirit of the outer world, can never be reconciled with their world. In fact, there is a supreme mistrust of the outside world - Hutterites feel the world mocks them, and they dislike its intrusion. The goal of the Hutterian life is to keep their people in, and the rest of the world out. This creation of boundaries enables critics to call them antisocial, and elicits tensions between the inside and the outside.

FAMILIES

Three to four generations of a family live on the colony. They follow a patrilineal, patrilocal system. Hutterite populations grow at an astonishing and steady rate. The Hutterite population has the highest growth rate in the world. Until 1965, it was 4.12% annually in the U. S., but today it is closer to 2.61% (Peter 1987:157) "A highly structured society will tend to enforce a high fertility", because if society is stable, values prescribe it and resources allow it. (Peter 1987:138-9) Therefore, colonies must be successful to have such high growth rates. Families average seven children per couple, and the children are rigorously disciplined. The boys work from a very early age, learning their places in the colony, and girls baby-sit their younger brothers and sisters, teaching them their roles and prepping them for marriage at the age of twenty.

Hutterite marriages are not based on love between a man and a woman as much as on a mutual love of God through marriage for the good of all. There is no divorce in the colony, or in the Hutterite religion. Young husbands and wives often live in the same building as their in-laws with their bedrooms across the hall from one another. This causes a lack of privacy, but is said to help the newly moved bride feel more at home and closer to the family. Hutterite women usually marry outside their birth colony, and brides are often taken to their new husband's colony. This patrilocalism prevents inbreeding. Incest, or what we define as first cousin marriages on both sides, is also prohibited in Hutterite society. By this definition, Hutterites maintain there is no incest, though there are some more removed cousin marriages.

Hutterites traditionally do not allow photographs, and this makes the job of the anthropologist from the outside world even more difficult. Their buildings are created with the rule of utility, not beauty. (Bach 1951:111) The entire commune functions as one farm, containing dirt paths and gravel roads. A general commune contains apiaries, silos, hog barns, orchards, cattle yards, gardens, fields and a separator house. Stubes, or houses, as I mentioned earlier, house multiple families and do not contain kitchens. Every facet of the Hutterites' daily life is a reminder of their religion. Their sole purpose is to serve God, and they are proud of having the largest book of martyrs in the Christian faith.

Hutterites take the Scriptures literally, applying every sentence to their daily lives. They follow a communal economy because the Scriptures say "the earliest Christians had all things in common". (Bach 1951:115) They have no art

because "Thou shalt not make unto Thee any graven image". (Bach 1951:116) They have no music that is not hymnal because "if one child had an instrument, why should not every child have one? Pretty soon no one would want to work, everyone would want to play. And when instruments of the world come in, the songs of the Lord go out". (Bach 1951:116) This is the basis of their living faith. All of this is to prevent tempting "the mind away from the simple, sheltered life". (Bach 1951:117) Hutterites simply see themselves as God's servants, honest people, excellent farmers, and conservators of the land. They make sure that their wealth and productivity stay put.

MONEY AND MATERIAL GOODS

Material possessions are unimportant in the Hutterite life, although it is getting harder and harder to teach their children as the materialistic and capitalistic U. S. moves closer and closer to their colonies. In 1951, one colony paid men fifty cents a month and women twenty-five cents a month - not for wages, but as a token reminder of how useless money is as a private possession. (Bach 1951:119) Women wear no jewelry or make-up, even though the Avon lady may sell them lotion and clear lip balm. Hutterites rarely leave the communal boundaries without a task or errand to be accomplished outside. Everything they need is inside - the bank, the farm, food, equipment, repair shop, shoemaker, broommaker, hatmaker - and everyone has a place. There is a Pig Boss, a Cattle Boss, a Kitchen Boss, a Pastor (who is the "Boss of Bosses"), and every man will be a boss at some time during his life. (Bach 1951:121)

Hutterites believe, or want to believe, that their colonies are utopia. They say they have no pride, no envy, no jealousy, no venereal diseases, no government, no inequality, no divorce. "In their history, there has never been a homicide." (Hostetler 1983:3) They have designed a way in which to become whole. "Our infirmities and shortcomings...find help through warm, brotherly living together, so that what is lacking in one can be supported and complemented through the help of the other." (Gross 1965:Dedication Page) While this may be true, it may not be true when Hutterites say they also have no juvenile delinquents, no crime, and no dishonesty. Hutterites may have as many injustices, frustrations and interpersonal conflicts as other societies.

There is no doubt that the Hutterites have the best intentions and are devoutly religious, perhaps even to the point that the Western mind cannot comprehend. They say, for example, that to join "all you need do is to desire honestly our way of life. When you are assured in your heart of that, come and give up your possessions. These will be put into a communal purse. You then adopt our customs and live as we do". (Bach 1951:124-5) If you surrender yourself to the Hutterite Lord and Church, they say you receive in return, security, friends, an understanding of the meaning of life, and no time constraints because the Hutterites go slowly through life.

MODERN TECHNOLOGY

While separate from the outside world, the Hutterites are not ignorant to it. Bach explains that the Hutterites do have electricity, phones, farm trucks, farming equipment, computers, kitchen appliances, fax machines, private bathrooms, and

water systems. None of these, Hutterites say, are used for pleasure, only for work or to ease labor. They have no radios, for example, because they are not necessary for work. Bach points out the dilemma this causes for the Hutterites, one of the reasons why outsiders have a hard time understanding their ways. "If we don't have modern improvements, we are accused of living in the Middle Ages, and if we get a few of life's necessities, we are becoming worldly." (Bach 1951:127) It is these sorts of fine lines that help cause confusion and misunderstanding by Hutterian neighbors, as a later chapter will detail further.

MEALS

Meals are served communal/family style. All of the cooking is done by the women. Only the Pastor eats in his own home; every one else eats in the dining hall. Babies are fed at home before the rest of the family goes to the dining halls. The children and the adults are separated. Seating arrangements are permanent and arranged by sex and age. Men and women never sit together. Typical German foods are cooked by the kitchen women, including many types of bread and dumplings, gravy, potatoes, sausages, meats, noodles, soups, geese, turkeys, ducks, head cheese, porridge, cheese, eggs, fish, pies, cakes, vegetables, wine, coffee and *kvass*, a sugary fermented Russian drink. The only food items not produced on the colony are coffee and sugar; they are among the only store-bought food items.

SCHOOLING/CHILDREN

The Hutterite school system is also attacked by their critics. *Kleine Schule*, or the Little School, is for children ages two through five. At this school,

they are taught Hutterian beliefs. Regular School, grades one through eight, brings in state-ordered teachers supervised by the Department of Education which meet all state requirements, just as in any public school. Hutterite children are also educated for half the day in their traditional German school, which is purely religious teachings. They are educated with the original 16th Century documents that were hand written and carried to South Dakota during the diaspora. The children are usually educated through the eighth grade only. Young children learn roles from the very beginning of their lives. Many Hutterite colonies, interestingly, do not have separate churches and use the school rooms for worship.

A child's life structure will be basically this: from birth to age two or three they will be at home with their family. From age three to five they will attend the Little School, which is like our kindergarten, a Hutterite word, from 7:00 am to 4:00 p.m. At this point in life, children are given "little child status", meaning that they are rigidly disciplined. The outsiders are used to frighten children into staying on the colony, with threats such as "they will take you away if go near them". At age six the child moves on to the Big School, or Regular School, where they will be taught the State's curriculum. They are now given big child status. At age fifteen, they will go to work. The children aged fifteen through twenty form a peer group. They are treated like adults, but are still separated from them. For example, they go to Sunday school with children as young as six. Older children are reprimanded with shame, not punishment, and reportedly disobedience is a relatively new phenomenon on the colonies.

Deviancy on the colonies consists of drinking or smoking, sneaking in a radio or an instrument, or meeting with a member of the opposite sex without adult supervision. Premarital pregnancy has risen in the last fifteen years, but I could find no exact percentages, as this type of information is never publicized. Adolescence is known as "the foolish years". Like the adults, stratification of the children is by age and sex, with young females considered to be the most emotional, weak and irresponsible. Children belong to the entire colony, and everyone looks after and out for them. Children's personality types are minimized at young ages, to try to ease integration in their adult lives and roles. This is seen as for the good of the whole colony, or personal sacrifice for the good of many.

DATING AND MARRIAGE

Dating begins at around age sixteen or eighteen, and marriages often occur between ages nineteen and twenty-two. No one is married before their adult baptism. After marriage, males wear full beards to show their manhood. No single males may wear beards. Some more acculturated communities will say that a couple is going steady, and may even allow a young man to drive one of the farm trucks to pick up his date. Engagement and marriage traditionally happens in one week, but some may take longer in more lenient colonies. All weddings take place on Sunday morning at 9:00. No affection is allowed in public, and men and women are separated most of the day and at all meals.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN, AND CHANGES IN THEIR ROLES

To be a man and be called a "woman's man" is very derogatory. Female attributes are seen as very weak by the Hutterites. The woman in Hutterite society is basically looked down upon. Women are submissive and resigned, and are often withdrawn or in quiet denial of this fact. "Hutterite marriage problems are usually well hidden behind the quiet suffering of many Hutterite women." (Peter 1987:79) While many married Hutterite women may be unhappy, divorce is prohibited. More progressive colonies now often have psychiatrists to help counsel women on marital problems. Marriage is seen as a duty to the Lord, and women are assumed to be sexually available to their husbands. This is partly due to their submissive role in Hutterite society, and partly due to the tradition of having many children. Women are allowed to retire at the age of forty-five, and have the option of continuing work if they find it enjoyable. While marriages may be unhappy, Hutterite women generally report that they are well taken care of, have generally happy lives, and have many very close friends.

Women's roles have been changing in recent years. Women are still not seen in the formal structure of the colony, and are still seen as the weaker sex. This will never change, as Hutterites take the scriptures literally and women must assume "the role of Eve in the Garden of Eden". (Peter 1987:198) In other words, "Adam" comes first, literally and figuratively. The virilocal residence pattern (women going to their new husbands' colony) will also not change, because of the need to protect against inbreeding. The only role of power Hutterite women attain is that of Kitchen Boss. All other bosses are men. There

have been, however, important changes in Hutterite women's lives. There has been a shift to a better focus on women's health, and doctors and surgery in hospitals have been accepted. Women now refuse intercourse more than before, and this contributes to the lower birth rates. Women are more selective and slower to marry now, dating more than in the past.

Hutterite women feel that their lives are getting better and better, and many factors contribute to this. Because of machinery, their work loads are much lighter, and cleaner. Old jobs, such as butchering, were very messy without new tools. Commercial garments, such as socks and underwear, are now bought instead of sewn or knitted by hand, as was the tradition. While they still wear no make-up, there is a greater focus on appearance now, through diet and exercise. Lotions, hair dyes, bras, pantyhose, and modern-shaped clothes that have a waistline have helped to contribute to women's comfort and appearances.

Some women reportedly talk back to men now at times, which was unheard of in the past. Some sell items such as jarred fruits or crafts at stands on the side of the road or other handmade items and keep the money. Because of these new trends, there has been an emergence of family differences. Not all changes are for the better, however. Women sometimes feel more isolated because their daily work schedules are more diverse. New technology requires less people for a project, and women do not spend as much time in work groups as they used to. They do have more individuality than before, and this may cause some confusion for them, as they try to reconcile this with their religion. Women still have no power or authority, though they say that they admire their

men for having to vote and take care of business, and do not miss the responsibilities they are denied.

DEFECTION

Defection from the colonies does occur at a small rate, and the Hutterites say that they do not try to stop it nor punish it. Usually it is young, single, healthy men that defect, reportedly due to becoming Protestant after searching for the personal aspects of God and religion. Defection "is a painful and costly experiment". (Peter 1987:46) While most defectors are said to return in a short time, and are supposed to be accepted back to the colony, there are reminders that the defector doubted 'The Way' and mocked the Hutteritian life. Defection results in a severing of religious ties, kin ties and community ties, and forces the defector to cross barriers into the outside world and its problems. The outside world is often very hard on these defectors. They are uneducated, have thick accents, are very naïve and often inexperienced in the ways of the capitalist and materialist America. *Weggeloofener*, or runaway, has a very negative connotation in the Hutterite language and has a meaning as strong as "joining the devil". If the defector is young and unbaptized, he or she will be forgiven upon return. If a Hutterite marries or has children on the outside, they will never be welcomed back on the colony.

It is hard to state an absolute occurrence rate for defection, yet it is easy to see how it happens. The American ways of individualism and privitism erode traditional Hutterite values, which are very collective and where one has no privacy. Books, magazine, and newspapers are often smuggled into the colonies

today by younger brethren, and they show alternative ways of life. There is also increased exposure to the outside world due to traveling more, both locally and between colonies. Today, Hutterites are more aware of others outside the colony than ever before. They themselves feel the pressure of believing that their way of life is so superior to others on the outside, when at the same time they are ignored by the outside world, looked down upon, or blamed for local economic problems. The Hutterites are open to accepting converts, but have reportedly had only ten in ten years. They know that they can no longer be completely shielded to the outside world, and must recognize it. And often, their neighbors are making them acutely aware of what the outside world thinks of them.

CONTROLLED ACCULTURATION

Controlled acculturation is a term coined by Joseph W. Eaton in 1952 to explain the survival technique of the Hutterian Brethren. (Peter 1987:3) Their cultural autonomy and social distinctiveness, as well as the continuity of their life ways over a span of almost 500 years, make them a topic of great interest to sociologists. Hutterites consciously control change to keep their cultural integrity. This means that they are not only aware of the outside, modern world, but are in effect controlling it and its effects on their own lives. Of course, this is an ongoing struggle on the colonies, and which is stronger, the inside or the outside, remains to be seen. While the Hutterites publicly claim their lives are not changing because of the encroachment of the outside world, many would privately disagree.

How do the Hutterites survive crises, troubles and problems so well? Are they merely resilient because of their history of persecution? John Bennett argues that "the managed democracy of Hutterites" is the dual system of a Hutterite being disciplined by the colony and knowing others will be disciplined as well. In other words, there is both a real and perceived equality in the colony. (Cited in Peter 1987:4) While Bennett is an economic materialist, Vayda and McCay (1975) stress ecological explanations. Peter believes that the Hutterites fit well into Weber's theory, for example his definitions of traditional authority and the sect. Weber's elective affinity, or *wahlverwandtschaft*, also seem eerily reminiscent of the Hutterites' chosen lifestyle that exists today in the U. S.

Weber also introduces the idea of charismatic disciples, Peter notes. In Hutterite society, these are the preachers (see Weber's *Protestant Ethic*). Work is a duty, or "calling" as Weber puts it, to the Hutterites. Theirs is a culture of work. Peter says that they have been able to survive "because they were able to modernize their institutional configuration from time to time in order to bring their institutions in line with the contemporary mentality of their members", (1987:23). However, colonies are becoming more unlike each other as numbers and distances between them increase. As they change, their institutions change.

ADAPTABILITY

The fertility rate, as mentioned above, has been declining recently on the Hutterite colonies. There are some reasons why this may be happening. First, Hutterites all must have a job on the colony. When there are too many brethren for everyone to be employed, it is time for the colony to split, or fission. Since

they started using modern farming technology in the 1930s, they need fewer people to run the farm. Some people also believe that women who have seen the outside feel less pressure to conform to the Hutterites' traditional marriage roles. It is also less attractive to them to have such large families, perhaps because they are waiting a bit longer to get married.

Besides the decline in the birth rate, there have been other effects of modernization on the colonies. There is a bit more privacy, which leads to the tendency to acquire personal items. However, most of these items remain traditional, and there would surely be trouble if one were caught with radios, magazines and other "worldly" items. Some personal money is allowed now, but there are variations on exactly how this works. Most colonies allow between two and ten dollars per adult as a monthly allowance. If someone is traveling for the colony, such as for farm business, they are given a daily allowance. Males are often hired by neighboring farms to help out with work, in which case they will keep all or most of the money they receive in return. This is "allowed" via hiding it from the Preacher. Today, more marriage gifts are given than used to be the norm. Gifts are given to and by kinsmen, and because families are so large, these may add up.

Hutterites also have to deal with economic changes. They use agricultural equipment, and face bureaucratic restrictions by whatever states they inhabit, as any corporation does. Each colony is run as a private corporation. Colonies face limited expansion because of surrounding farms, and may have great distances between them. Hutterites used to grow many small crops, but have moved

towards farming only one very large crop, such as wheat. They do use computers for farm tracking and business purposes. Their buildings have become more attractive, with running water, sprinklers, electricity, and landscaping. Some colonies also contain coffee shops, while most have air conditioning, machine shops, gas stations, and every thing they need to be almost totally self-sufficient.

Women say that they miss a few of the older things that have been dying out, such as spinning their fabrics from scratch. Children have started using English more and more instead of their archaic German, but German is still the primary language. The younger members of the colony are also now more involved in the daily economy, and this is because technology makes it easier for them to learn work at an earlier age. "Each colony is forced to find its own form of economic specialization, subject to local opportunities and conditions. The result is a loss of the traditional agricultural wisdom," (Peter 1987:195). Today, economically different colonies are emerging from the Hutterite system. While there is less isolation from the outside world, and solidarity and commonality between colonies is decreasing, the Hutterites hold firm in their beliefs and will not disband as far as can be seen into the future. These are all examples of how boundaries are shifting, and how uncertain and imprecise boundaries are.

COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

Each community has a four-level male authority structure. Women are submissive and are not involved in the authoritative structure of the colony in any way. The highest position in the colony is of course a religious position, with the

Head Preacher in charge of all assets and daily life on the colony. The basic structure looks like this:

LEVEL I: Executive Council

This level consists of six elders, including: two Preachers, the Manager, the Field Manager, an elder, and the German school teacher.

LEVEL II: Department Managers

This level contains between eight and sixteen people, depending on the size of the colony. They may include Bosses such as the Cattle Boss and the Chicken Boss.

LEVEL III: Young Baptized Males

All the corresponding men in the colony are in this group. They are from twenty years of age up.

LEVEL IV: Unbaptized Male Adolescents

These are young men form the labor force in the colony, and are under twenty years of age. They, like the females, have no official voice (until baptism), but are included in the hierarchy because they are male.

AGRICULTURE

Hutterite colonies are set up legally as large corporations, with profits divided equally between all members for tax purposes. While each member is not paid, this system allows for certain tax breaks, a complaint of Hutterite critics. Crops include bees, cattle, grains, vegetables, pigs and poultry. The bulk of products are sold, because they are so highly productive. Hutterites are licensed to sell these items. Hutterites can, freeze, jar, or store in root cellars plenty of

food staples for off months, and all 130 people on the colony are always well-fed. Chapter Three discusses further the criticisms of taxation, social security, and worker's compensation of the Hutterites' corporations.

MISCELLANEOUS INTERESTING FACTS

Hutterites believe that the land has been created by God, and therefore cannot be owned as private property. Following this belief, they all share the land of the commune equally. Hutterites attend eight church services per week: one each evening, and one Sunday mornings. The Colony Boss is chosen by a very democratic vote, with the one exception that women have no part in it. Women are not allowed to cut their hair until it is extremely long. Each time it is washed, it is rolled back at the edges of the face, wrapped into a bun on the top of the head, and covered with a polka-dotted kerchief, and often a plastic guard under that. This process may take an hour. This is another traditional way in which "they" separate themselves from "us".

Hutterites work closely together, and compare themselves with a beehive. Each bee is kept busy with his or her particular job, working towards the good of the colony. Their diverse productivity not only includes farms and dairies as mentioned earlier, but vineyards, crafts, bookbinding, cutlery, masonry, and leather work. Mechanics make nearly all their own tools with scrap iron. The only refrigerator on the colony is the one in the main kitchen. While they do use trucks for farm work and find them very useful, there are no passenger cars on the colony. Old school buses are purchased for transportation of groups to go shopping and travel to other colonies. The classic books of religion are hand-

written artifacts, each colony owning their own set. Everyone in the colony needs and receives the strong support of the entire colony around them. For children, lesson number one is obedience and lesson number two is religion. At the age of fifteen, every one receives a hand-made chest for storing personal mementos and the other few personal items one may have.

While families are obviously important to Hutterites, the *bruderhof's* objectives always come first. The family will do whatever is best for the good of the entire colony. This may include harder decisions, such as young married women moving away and leaving their birth colony for their new husband's colony. While there is still no birth control on the colonies, Hutterites do accept modern medicine and go to hospitals and use doctors. Mentally ill Hutterite members go to group therapy on the colony, and there is no taboo on medical care of any sort, though they also still use traditional home remedies as well. I have found no evidence that Hutterites suffer any more medical problems than any other U. S. population. Children suffer no economic barriers, as colonies are very successful. All members share a great respect for their elders. Boys are named after their fathers and uncles. Men retire at age fifty, women at age forty-five. Elderly or ailing Hutterites are nursed, and everyone is buried in the communal cemetery. Every Hutterite has one of fourteen original family surnames: Decker, Entz, Glanzer, Gross, Hofer, Kleinsasser, Mandel, Stahl, Tschetter, Waldner, Walter, Wipf, Wollman or Wurz.

Hutterites have no missionaries and do not force their views on anyone. They believe there is no mystery to the way they live - no one guesses, every one

knows. They are very secure in knowing that they have no ignorance, because they know the will of God and He is "the sole law and order". (Gross 1965:41) They believe self-discipline creates inner happiness and peace. Hutterites say that they have not designed the way they live, God has. Agriculture is honest work provided by God. To keep the system running at full potential, everything runs on a clock.

Hutterites truly do not trust the outside world. Many despise and fear it. They believe it is lustful, unholy, violent and materialistic. Paul Gross uses the phrase "full of weeds" to describe the *weltgeist*. Hutterites feel that recreation is just one step away from crime and corruption. They believe they are not of "the twisted world around them". (Gross 1965:136)

FINAL THOUGHTS

The Hutterites' *bruderhofs*, or home of brothers, try to remain very separate from the outside world. They pride themselves on never suffering a homicide, sharing God's communal land, attending eight church services each week, maintaining original dress and language, and acting in egalitarian and democratic ways (by their definitions). Hutterites believe that no man is perfect, and they practice forgiveness. Every member is held accountable to explicit and unambiguous norms of the Hutterite society. While they say they feel free and individualistic, they attend no activities without permission, always put the group

first, know and accept their place, and understand that they will be scrutinized by all of the colony.

Hutterites maintain no private ambitions, but work for the colony's collective good. They do not allow antisocial behavior, and all members act traditionally and under collective decisions of their elders. Each member is "conformist, obedient, humble and responsible to and for himself and others". (Shenker 1986:149) Ninety percent of defectors return, there is no divorce or suicide, low delinquency, anomie and insecurity. (Shenker 1986:157) If a member is lonely, the colony answers their loneliness. The Hutterites are peaceable, pacifist, good, and self-contained. They consider themselves "the plain people". Ruth states, "they raise a statement without saying a word," (Ruth 1985:61).

If this is the case, why are the Hutterites so often hated by their neighbors? Why are they the victims of persecution, hate crimes, rumors and harsh criticisms? And what does this mean for tolerance in America, a supposedly democratic and multi-ethnic "melting pot" of religions, colors, beliefs and cultures? How do people come to dislike and fear what they do not understand? What does it mean to racialize religious groups? And finally, what is the future for the Hutterites as they become nearer to the *weltgeist*? (Bach 1951:132) These are issues I will be looking at in the next chapters.

C⁷ HAPTER TWO

∞ FIELD WORK AND ECONOMIC BLAME ∞

Now that I had done my historical research, it was time to get out into the field. On March 26th, 1999, "Dateline NBC" aired a segment on the Hutterites which inspired me to write this paper. The airing brought into the public eye that Hutterites are the targets of maliciousness. The message was that Americans, and especially rural Americans, are not very tolerant of people who are different. The Hutterites are just one of many possible representations of this, seen in rural Montana as outsiders who are taking over. They are anti-America communists who practice unfair business.

Attempting to chase down more of the information obtained from the "Dateline" airing, I went to Conrad, Montana, and went directly to the Sheriff's Office. If anyone could tell me the truth about the feelings of locals towards Hutterites, he could. The Sheriff would know all about the crime that occurs on the colonies, the fire at the new colony that was reported by "Dateline", and any buried feelings the local farmers have toward the Hutterites. The Sheriff had

asked the Under Sheriff to meet with me. As the Under Sheriff began to speak he gave me the impression there are no problems on or with the colonies at all. Having jurisdiction over three colonies in the county, he stated there had been no reported hate crimes or other criminal instances on the colony during the two years he had been employed there. Then he began to get more comfortable with me.

Within a few minutes, the conversation had turned from professional to personal. The Under Sheriff told me the Hutterite children “work like dogs” and that some people dislike them. Asking him to elaborate, I was informed that the store owners do not like Hutterites because they are “Jews”, saving money by going to Canada for bulk goods or doing repair work themselves. They are known to be cheap, liars and thieves, and some stuff stolen goods in their clothes. Farmers in the county do not like them because “they buy up all the land” and “undercut costs”. Now it was my job to speak to these people and find out why they feel this way. I was sure this would be no easy task. The field work dilemma: Do you believe what people tell you? Do you know when they are telling you their true feelings and when they are telling you what they believe you want to hear? This, I was about to find out.

To say the least, the “Dateline” videotape was misleading. They portrayed the colony fire to be in Conrad, and focused only on the town of Conrad and the nearby Rockport Colony. This was not the true nature of the situation. While Rockport Colony is the largest one and the closest one to Conrad, and Hutterites from Rockport do business in Conrad, the fire was on the Camrose Colony.

Camrose is currently under construction southeast of Shelby, northeast of Conrad, in a different county than Conrad. The result was that I would need to speak with business owners in three towns, three different counties' sheriffs offices, and two different colonies, just to get the true perspective of what the Dateline video had portrayed. To research the community relationships of all of Montana's Hutterite colonies would have resulted in volumes. I am sure each colony has its own story, but I had intended from the start to focus on the Camrose fire. "Dateline" had already documented the feelings of contempt for the Hutterites in this area. The video showed, through interviews, that some Montanans actually despise the Hutterites, refusing to sell land to them and blaming them for problems in the economy. Now I intended to research more about those feelings.

From the Sheriff's Office in Conrad, I went through the downtown area in an effort to speak to shop clerks, managers and owners, or anyone who would have an opinion of, or experiences with, the Hutterites. The manager of the local grocery store seemed, frankly, quite nervous by my questions. He quickly informed me that the Hutterites are regular customers, friendly people, and they are treated no differently than anyone else. Next, the clerk at the farm supply store and his assistant were willing to talk with me. They took a few moments, but soon warmed up to me and the idea of my project. These two men, one in his late forties and one in his late sixties, did not hold the same opinions as one another. The younger man told me that some Hutterites steal, but that this is no different from the general public. He admitted that the Hutterites manage money

well because they are run like a corporation, and as a whole are generous. The older man, insensitive to what I would think, said, "there's a shit load of 'em". He also made note of how "some people" don't like the way they buy land or products, because they buy big to save money. They purchase large quantities of goods, often not locally, because they are "like Jews". The younger man also specified that the Hutterite communities support each other, so even if one colony had problems, its brethren would not be left to handle them alone. He also felt the Rockport Colony's members are comfortable in the area and coming into town.

Wondering if I might get more candid responses if I also mailed out some questionnaires, I went back to the hotel room and obtained addresses from the phone book for area farm and ranch equipment and supply stores. I included some that were mentioned on "Dateline". Within only one day, I began to get responses back in the mail. I will discuss those in a moment. It was time to move on to the next county. The Sheriff there told me that the only crime he remembered involving the colony nearby was when he charged two Hutterite youths with vandalizing county equipment twenty-five years ago. When I explained this was not exactly what I was looking for, he said, "We get along just fine. There are some in the general population that do not like the Hutterites." Finally, it came out that a non-Hutterite man had been arrested for burglary on the Miller Creek Colony, down the road from Rockport.

With this information, I wondered if the Sheriff of the county where Camrose is located would be willing to talk to me. After getting through the Chief

Deputy, who was anything but helpful, the Camrose Sheriff, as I will refer to him, came out to talk to me. He, too, was tentative at first. After I assured him this paper would not be made public, published, or used to do any harm, he gave me some interesting information. He said there has been no crime on the new colony, which is still under construction, since the fire two years ago. The fire destroyed \$100,000 in lumber alone, and over \$300,000 worth of goods in total. The Sheriff talked about how people in the community (Shelby) were supportive after the fire because they felt badly about it. In his personal opinion, the Hutterites are hard-working, self-sufficient, own great equipment, have great produce, and are good mechanics. When I asked about how the Hutterites contribute to the local economy, the Sheriff said he feels they do, by purchasing machinery, vans, parts and farm supplies. He stressed that they are a part of the community. They are treated just like any other people in his jurisdiction, but they are culturally different.

On the negative side, the Sheriff mentioned that the corporate tax laws are "a small problem". I asked if the local farmers were the people most sensitive to this issue, and he said yes. When it came time to talk about the Camrose fire, I could tell he became a little uneasy. I think this is because he had not arrested anyone. In fact, the Federal Bureau of Investigation investigated it as a hate crime and they have not made any arrests either. By this point we had been talking for a while, and the Sheriff must have decided he could trust me. He told me that his suspects are two farmers. This was what I had expected, so I did not act surprised, though I was surprised he gave me this information. He was about

to get to the true nature of the Hutterite-neighboring farmer relationship. The way he explained it to me is this: In order to be successful in farming, especially in Montana, you have to be very versatile. You must know about the land, equipment, crops, weather, animal husbandry and much, much more. The fact is, many people are not this versatile. The Hutterites are.

The Shelby Sheriff gave me directions to the Camrose Colony, and I decided to go there even though it is still under construction. I was told to ask for Joe The Blacksmith, the new Colony Boss. When I got there, however, only one person was on the site. A Hutterite elder in his sixties, Pete was curious as to what I was doing there. He was working alone on a house; the other men had already stopped work to go back to their home colonies for the weekend. Pete did not want to talk about the fire. He wanted to talk about how he had never been married; that is why he does not wear a beard. He wanted to show me how to lay out linoleum on the floor, where the bathroom was going to go, the chicken house, any topic but the fire. After spending some time with Pete, he finally mentioned to me that someone at East End Colony has been roping the Hutterite signs down. (Pulling them down with lassos.) Hutterite colonies often have large signs at their entrances advertising fryers, eggs and produce for sale. He also mentioned recently some "kids" have been driving through, and in doing so tearing up, the fields in the middle of the night. Pete said I should head back to the Rockport Colony. His brother lives there, and they would all be happy to give me a tour.

Pulling into the Rockport Colony, my assistant and I felt a bit nervous. While I had heard how welcoming the Hutterites are, the farm looked a bit like a prison. The men all lined up to await my car, and approaching them was a bit like approaching the inquisition. There were seven Hutterite men, and only my assistant and me. Fortunately, my assistant is a man who was able to help break the ice with the Hutterite men. Because women are subordinate to men on the colony, it was important that the Hutterite men had a man to speak with instead of just me. The evening church service was about to begin, and the men asked if we could return again the following day and then they would show us around.

The next day, we arrived on schedule. Immediately we were ushered into the dairy barn. The Dairy Boss was very enthusiastic about showing us the cows, milking technology, and the enormous bull. This would continue for much of the day. No matter how I tried to steer the conversation to their relationships with their local community, the Hutterites only wanted to talk about farming. We had complete access to the hog barn (and even witnessed births there), the goats, chicken house, smoke room, kitchen, dining hall, church, repair shop, wood shop, root cellar and grounds. By the time we had seen all of the animals, we had a following of young men behind us. They wanted to know when I was going to ask farming questions, what I wanted to take home with me, and if I was getting the information I wanted. They are farmers, and trying to explain that I was interested in them for reasons other than farming was not easy.

Finally, a young man named Gary brought us into his home and offered us a tasting of home-made Hutterite rhubarb wine. At this point, we had been

accepted enough to try to get some information. I asked Gary and his family about the local people, how they felt about the Camrose fire, and what their business relationships were like with the local towns. The men seemed to believe these relationships are mostly pleasant. One did say that they buy goods wherever they can get the best price, but that they do go into town, usually on Saturdays, and purchase many things. Like Pete, they did not want to talk about the Camrose fire.

Gary mentioned that sometimes people in town, usually children or adolescents, call the brethren names. He seemed aware that some people do not like them. The colony teacher had brought in the "Dateline" tape and showed it to the Hutterites. When they saw what some of the people they do business with had said about them, they were understandably upset. One man interviewed by "Dateline" told me the show resulted in a gang of Hutterite men shoving him up against a wall demanding an explanation. Gary's sister said, "They said we eat our dead. I would wonder about somebody if I heard that, too." She was referring to a list of rumors the newscaster said are often spread about Hutterites.

Gary's thoughts were basically what I had expected. He informed me that just like all groups of people, the Hutterites have some good relationships and some not so good ones. Basically, they do not really care at all about what people on the outside think of them. Anything bad that happens involving the melding of Hutterites with the outside world only reinforces their beliefs. The reason they live the way they do is that the outside world cannot be trusted and is full of things that pull people away from God and religion. They honestly believe

that if anyone has malicious feelings towards them that it is because of jealousy, pure and simple. They do not enjoy, as no one would, talking about what people do not like about them. The Hutterites are well aware that they are a closed society and make every effort to keep it that way. The criminal acts that do happen to members of the colony, are forgiven. Gary mentioned, for example, someone he knew finding sugar in his gas tank. It is the Hutterite way to forgive, as their religion teaches that first and foremost.

The Hutterites really seemed as wonderful and as peaceable as all my research indicated they would be. They offered us smoked ham, bread, wine, oranges, beef jerky, even a baby pig. They brought us into their homes. The women let me photograph their children. They opened all of their doors and answered all of my questions. But as much as I want to write all about my experiences with them, the Hutterite point of view is secondary here. The real information must be obtained from those who dislike the Hutterites, those who racialize, persecute, try to harm and speak out against them. This is the information I obtained through interviews, the questionnaires I mailed, and the phone calls which would follow them.

The day after I mailed out my questionnaires, I began to receive them in my mailbox. They were all filled out completely. Some respondents attached blank pages for extra writing space. Some sent me newspaper articles and phone numbers of other people to contact. Some mailed me information about the Hutterites themselves. Some called me to talk for over an hour about their point of view, and still others were curious as to what my political agenda was.

All who responded, however, were eager to talk and explain their own personal points of view. Also of note is that even though these forms were intended to be short and completely anonymous in order to encourage their completion, I received forms with home addresses and phone numbers and requests for follow-up phone calls. All told, of the thirteen questionnaires I mailed out, I received seven back with detailed personal information about the respondent's experiences with the Hutterites.

In my written responses, there were three very obvious themes on which nearly all respondents commented. First, the Hutterites are bad for local business, and therefore for the local economy. Second, the Hutterite colonies effect only their neighbors, or people in close proximity to them. Third, people like the Hutterites as people, but dislike the way they operate.

One farm equipment company in Conrad said that the Hutterites are just like any other customers. The owner has one colony in particular that he says complains about everything, but he also noted some non-Hutterites that do the same. He found his dealings with the Hutterites to be routine and honest, saying they do contribute to the local economy, but not as much as a local farmer with a similar amount of acreage would. Another company CEO said, "If you get more than one in the store at a time, you are in trouble." He also feels the Hutterites are not assets as customers go, and do not contribute to the local economy *at all*.

An agriculture implement dealer, also in Conrad, says he has a good relationship with most of the Hutterites with whom he does business. He has experienced "a few (who) have not been honest in their dealings". He feels the

Hutterites are valuable to his business, and that the Hutterites he knows enjoy the area and coming into town. He credits the Hutterites with his business success, saying "they have contributed by being loyal partners of ours". Interestingly, he added that the Camrose fire was sad because it was deliberately set and yet no one has been charged. "We see some prejudice towards them from other people."

A female office manager in Havre, and the only woman to respond to my investigation, said that like all groups, there are a few "bad ones". She notes how friendly the Hutterites are as a whole, and that Havre likes them on average. One interesting detail she did give me is that the Hutterites "pay cash for everything, including large equipment purchases" that may be \$100,000 or more. A male in Great Falls was not as friendly. He has done business with the Hutterites for twenty-three years, and has a large distrust of them. He writes:

They are very good neighbors to their immediate neighbors - the rest, they do not care about - they will be good only to the extent that they think they must...politically. They are not good in general for the community - they will do business locally only to the extent absolutely necessary. As soon as they can cut out the middle man, they do, and go to Canada where what little national allegiance they have is! Most of them are not honest; they will look you in the eye and tell you whatever works. Some are honest, but very few. (Experiences with them have been) stressful, not pleasant - you always must be on guard because they will steal. But they're not as bad as ten years back.

This same informant told me to "go to a colony and pay attention. You will notice that *everything* is locked up with personnel locks - they don't even trust each other!"

The man who is my key informant owns a business in Conrad. He has been interviewed by "Dateline" and *The New York Times*, and was glad to speak to me. Feeling as if he was incorrectly portrayed in the 'Dateline' episode, he wanted to explain himself further. He not only answered all of my questions, but also called me on the phone, mailed me information, and supplied me with much printed information (such as news clippings), and new contacts. The Hutterites are a topic he is very passionate about. In my discussion of our conversations I will refer to him as "R.J."

R.J. and I spoke for a long time. He made clear that he likes the Hutterites as people, and has nothing personal against them. He does, however, have many concerns. R.J. feels it is important to realize that the "Hutterite problem", as he calls it, affects only neighbors of colonies. While some colonies near Billings are struggling financially (of the Dariusleut branch), the ones in my area of research (Lehrerleuts) are doing extremely well. This may localize the area of tension. Once land is bought by Hutterites, it will never come up for sale again. While this is a complaint of neighbors, it is factual. Neighbors will "hire Hoots" for extra help on their land, because Hutterites are skilled and plentiful, according to R.J.

R.J. told me many interesting stories of Hutterites trying to use his business to save themselves money. If something was broken and they needed to fix it, they would ask him to borrow it until they could get to Canada or Great Falls to buy it more cheaply. Needless to say, this put an undesirable taste in R.J.'s mouth regarding business deals with the Hutterites.

Another major concern of this informant is the projected future growth of the Hutterite population. He suggested it would be a good project to look at the colony family tree and try to predict how many colonies and Hutterites would be living in Montana in the next twenty-five, fifty or one hundred years. R.J. feels "infiltrated" by so many expanding colonies. He is especially nervous that more and more farmers will sell their land to expanding colonies, because "Montana's agricultural economy is in the toilet, and to get out of it, farmers will sell to the Hutterites if they have to".

R.J. also feels that his community in particular has a problem. Hutterites, he says, take away from local grocers and "erode away the economic base of the local community because they are so self-sufficient". While he feels infiltrated by the eighteen or so colonies in his region, he also believes six or more colonies are ready to split off. The economic issues are the most important to R.J. He explained how the 501K Tax Code allows the colony to, like a corporation, divide its total income by the number of Hutterites on the colony. His major complaint is that he cannot divide his income by his wife and child.

R.J. believes that not only do the Hutterites have an unfair playing field, but that they are also shrewd. Being swift people, he thinks they know how to work the system. He asks why Hutterites pay only state taxes, and why they do not pay social security. When I mentioned that they do not take benefits from social security, R.J. said, "Well I don't have that option". He noted that members of Congress and other churches do not pay social security, and feels all citizens

should have that option if some do. R.J. stated that these laws need revision. Again, he stresses that these feelings are all economic, and not personal.

R.J. spoke specifically about the Rockport Colony, and said that “they are the best colony because they are the oldest. There are good people there. Because they are older, they are better and more ethical.” He may be confusing separate branches of Hutterites in his thinking; as I mentioned earlier some are more liberal than others. R.J. said that in comparison to us, the Hutterites “are angels”. They are reliable and there for you if you need help. When I mentioned that not everyone feels this way and gave reference to the Camrose fire, R.J. mentioned that Camrose Colony “bought up four family farms”. He said the lumber that was burned was from Canada, not bought locally. Hutterites do, R.J. mentioned, contribute to the local economy in purchase items, but not enough. Finally, he said, “they are a cult”.

On a political level, it is important to note that Senator Conrad Burns has received many locally written letters. While the FBI and local Sheriff have investigated the Camrose fire, no one was ever charged. Camrose and another colony, Riverview, were reportedly bidding over the land which Camrose would buy. During this “land war”, rumor has it that there was some animosity formed between the two colonies. Two respondents informed me that it is their belief that the Camrose fire was set by the Riverview Colony. This has not, to my knowledge, been investigated. Christine Kauffman, of the Montana Human Rights Network in Helena, presided over a town hall meeting following the fire. R.J. went to listen, but said nothing was accomplished because it was done for

Hutterite benefit only by bleeding-heart liberals. (Also called "Californians" by a patriotic anti-Hutterite interviewee.)

One questionnaire I received said Hutterites were ninety percent honest and ten percent dishonest. This self-employed male also mentioned that doing business with them was a challenge, and that Hutterites contribute very little to the local economy. Most interesting was the statement of how Hutterites feel about Montana. "They love it. Soon they will dominate." One Hutterite was quoted in a Canadian paper as saying that they must break the will of their children at a young age. Based on that statement, the informant feels they are only a cult. He also voiced concern over the women's rights. "They haven't any! They are servants of the men and the colony." He also brought up that two years ago there was a sex-abuse investigation on a Hutterite Colony near Hussar, east of Calgary. News of that of course raised many a local eyebrow.

Another man who was featured on "Dateline" was Jerry Buckley. Mr. Buckley, as I was warned by one of his friends, would not shield me from his point of view by trying to sugar-coat it. I told him my research would be anonymous and that my paper would not be published. His response was, "Be my guest, print it. I'd say it to their face, and I have, many times." Mr. Buckley grew up with the Hutterites, and has known them both professionally and personally. He remembers when they were conscientious objectors during the War. He feels that they are not citizens, because "They don't believe in the flag or the Constitution or anything."

Mr. Buckley says the Hutterites “don’t contribute to anything”. He feels that they “claim religion as a mask, but are all money-motivated”. They won’t even pay to build a church, he said, in reference to some colonies having church services in their school houses. He says, “they are not good business people and they are not good farmers”. When I asked how they were able to become so successful, Mr. Buckley said it was because of their “slave labor”. He believes the Hutterites do not have to be good at anything when they have so many people working for free, all day every day. He said with support like that, anyone would be successful.

Mr. Buckley is an auctioneer focusing on farm and ranch industrial sales. He claims to have had thefts by Hutterites. “They will steal Christ off the Cross and come back later looking for the nails”, he touted. He told me that his friend Earl had all the machinery batteries stolen out of his farming equipment by Hutterites. He reported the incident to the Sheriff. Jerry also told me that the Hutterites’ neighbors have to “lock down everything on their property or it will be stolen” by them. He said, “I have nothing good to say about them at all.”

Mr. Buckley’s main concerns, like many others’ I have mentioned, are economic. He says, “those people are pure communism”, better and more effective than the communism attempted in Russia or China. He told me, as he said on “Dateline”, that he would never sell any land he owns to the Hutterites. “I wouldn’t sell land to those bastards if they’d pay a million dollars an acre!”, he exclaimed. No matter how much the price or where the land is, Hutterites will outbid everybody, Jerry says. Unless you decide not to sell to them, they will buy

up the entire state. He called the Hutterites "Fortune 500 Colonies", saying that they have 500 years' experience of hoarding money. They are "not worth a damn for local business. They'd drive all over Montana to save a nickel." Jerry calls the Hutterites "fur-bearing little Christians", indicating he looks at them as though they are animals.

The Hutterites are obviously disliked in certain arenas, certainly more so than was made apparent at the beginning of my research. With language such as "infestations" or "infiltrations", we are given metaphors for land seizures, wars, or bugs. With language like "they", "those people", "Hoots", "Hooties" or even "bastards", Hutterites are stripped of their person-ness and identity. "Fur-bearing little Christians" accuses them of either being animal-like or overly-zealous towards their religion. The language of discrimination is certainly apparent here, and would be an excellent avenue for further study.

Another important factor in interpreting the negative feelings Hutterites seem to produce is nationalism. Looking beyond the Hutterites' separatism, intentional communities, religion, race, culture and language, nationalism is a relatively new and very important concept. Recalling Benedict Anderson's imagined communities, our American-ness is an identity. Our nation says who we are; it is no longer a small community area. Nationalism may be embedded in our institutions, it may be culturally classified. National character and material culture may influence each other. Perhaps the Hutterites represent what Redfield and Durkheim would refer to as the harmonious whole, or the rural society. This is the opposite of the urban society, which is a product of national culture and

urbanization. Nationality is a construct, an identity associated with the political. Somehow, the political becomes emotional. This is what Anderson refers to as imagined communities. It implies camaraderie, even in times of struggle. Where does this nation-ness come from? That is still debated, but it is taken as real by its citizens. It is deep, intense, and emotional. And it is why Jerry Buckley dislikes the Hutterites for not caring about the flag, the Constitution, or for living in a way which he associates with communism.

Anderson writes that nationality is a cultural artifact often labeled with a capital "N" as though it were a title and not an ideology. Nationalism invents, or creates, nations. He defines nation as "an imagined political community" that is both limited and sovereign. (Anderson 1991:6) A nation is imagined because we do not know all of our fellow countrymen, yet we imagine our "communion". This is true for just about any community, not just the large-scale nation. The Hutterites, on the other hand, live in a true "community", in which they know all of their fellow members. The nation is limited because it has finite boundaries to other nations, and it is sovereign because it is equated with freedom. Finally, it is a community because the nation is conceived of as a comradeship.

How does this idea of nation become so powerful and emotional? Why are people willing to kill or die for it? Anderson argues that fiction seeps into reality, linking fraternity, power and time. (Anderson 1991:36) The example that he uses is print capitalism, which allowed people to relate in new ways. This printed material links language fields and connects people, fixes the "native" language making it seem antique, and creates languages of power by giving the

illusion that only some languages are worthy of printing. Anderson stresses that this was an accidental process fixed in a particular historic situation, but that could then be duplicated. He argues that this language, or print capitalism, created the modern nation out of the imagined community.

Of course, nations seen in this way are impossible. In order to have a community that is a nation, everyone must speak English in the U. S. and be assimilated. This is true for the Indians, the Jews and the Hutterites. Anderson explains that this “moral grandeur” inspires love, even self-sacrificing love. Few people hate their nation. In fact, we use the metaphoric language of home and kinship to illustrate how we are naturally tied to our nation, like it is unchosen as is our gender and skin color. This language is fabricated through music and art, the National Anthem and the Statue of Liberty. It is so natural, that immigrants become “naturalized”. The language of the nation depicts it as at once open and closed. It is closed to non-speakers. The language we are born with restores the past, imagines fellowships, and creates futures. (Anderson 1991:154)

What happens if you are not born with this language? Anderson points out that to some people, religion and skin color override the spoken language. Some people do not belong, even if they do speak our language. The Hutterites are perfect examples of this. They do speak English, but also speak German. Some people believe that they are not a part of our nation, our community. Their first allegiance is to Germany, not to the United States. This is perceived, not real, by non-Hutterites. The fact is that the Hutterites would not go to war for Germany either, even though they speak the language. Hutterites are not

assimilated, and therefore threaten the idea of the community that is false and fragile in the first place. The next chapter details how the Hutterites have never been accepted as a part of our nation.

Lastly, let me mention the Hutterites' point of view of the "Dateline" episode. In the Great Falls Tribune, a Hutterite man named Eli Hofer from the North Harlem Colony east of Havre wrote a response to the show. He wrote that "Dateline" was stirring up trouble, inciting Hutterites' "neighbors to rise in arms against them". (Hofer 1999:11A) He also said that "Dateline" had perpetuated unsubstantiated rumors about the Hutterites, creating people to become more confused about who they really are. Finally, he writes, "Hutterites need to live to please God, not...anyone else." (Hofer 1999:11A) This is a final commentary on how strong the Hutterite religion is, allowing them to dismiss what goes on around them in favor of putting all their efforts into God and their Colony.

C H A P T E R T H R E E

∞ RUMORS, PREJUDICE, AND CRITICISMS FROM THE PERIPHERY FROM 1914 TO THE PRESENT ∞

I. 1874-1980

Chapter One discussed a few of the objections neighbors, and even total strangers, have of the Hutterites. These include private and German education, separation, land acquisition, taxation breaks, and extreme religious beliefs. The local populace, including Montana farmers and business people, contend that “foreigners” (Germans) are taking over the local land, that the law will not aid in their plight, and that the Hutterites cannot, or will not, be assimilated into the majority population. Prejudice against the Hutterites extends back to Moravia, as I also discussed in Chapter One. But what has been their historical experience in America?

The Hutterites came to America in 1874 where they settled in the Dakota Territory, which became South Dakota in 1889. The Federal Government was trying to encourage movement to the West, so the Hutterites were seen as valuable and desirable settlers. The Homestead Act allowed families to purchase

19,200 acres for \$8,000, and this allowed the Hutterites to buy enough land to move comfortably into South Dakota and set up farms. Their seemingly peaceful existence would last only forty years.

The first Hutterite colony was established in Bon Homme, and communes began to spread from there. In 1917, when World War I began, there were 17 colonies in South Dakota and two in Montana, totaling about 2,000 Hutterites. Their German heritage would not be ignored during this time. "The South Dakota Hutterites were now confronted with a fervid, irrational, nationalist-patriotic spirit leaving in its wake the most flagrant violations of Civil Rights in American History," (Hostetler 1983:126). What was once indifference towards the Hutterites shifted to "hostile intolerance". (Ibid)

"No country has tolerated the Hutterites for long nor been able to bring about a thorough assimilation of them," (Flint 1975:66). The Hutterites seem to be a people without a country, often seeking refuge from religious or ethnic persecution. In the U. S., people seem to distrust and resent their expansion, even though they have inhabited the Northwest for many generations and consider themselves U. S. residents. Before World War I, starting in about 1914, propaganda was spread about Germans in the U. S., claiming them to be brutal imperialists and a threat to democracy. Until this time, not much attention was paid to the Hutterites in North America. When war was declared on April sixth, 1917, their situation worsened. German books were confiscated, Hutterites suffered abuse, and they were regarded as obstinate and stubborn. Americans were on a tirade of nationalism and anti-German patriotism. The citizenship and

loyalty of anyone who did not enlist was questioned. Newspapers printed articles declaring the Hutterites as unpatriotic, cowardly, pro-German, Kaiser-supporting troublemakers.

In an answer to non-Hutterite protests, President Wilson said Hutterites were expected to join in non-combatant areas in the Selective Service Act of May, 1917. The Hutterites, however, did not want to be party in any way to any violence. They refused to join up or buy war bonds. The more they refused to go into service, the more they were pressured. Their German language created more intolerance and misunderstanding. People in South Dakota spread the word that they were helping "the enemy". All German speaking people were hated during this time. Eventually, German was prohibited by the State government, and "Yankton high school students were highly praised when they threw all their German textbooks into the Missouri River while singing the Star-Spangled Banner." (Hostetler 1983:130) Hutterites did not "want to overthrow the state, but wanted to divorce themselves from its work and methods," (Flint 1975:67). In response to their stance, animals were stolen from the colonies, elders were beaten, and mobs attacked them. Bizarre accusations ensued, such as the Hutterites ground glass into the flour they sold. Their German ethnicity made them targets.

Wartime hysteria led neighbors to believe that Hutterites were "enemy aliens," (Flint 1975:86). This is a stereotype they still fight today. In Canada, similar events took place. As mentioned in Chapter One, the Hutterites' colonies are set up as corporations for tax purposes. During World War I, South Dakota's

State government dissolved these corporations. Conscious objectors, or C.O.s, were tried by courts, and four Hutterite men were murdered. Jacob Wipf and three Hofer brothers, Joseph, Michael and David, were sent to Camp Funston when they refused to obey military orders because they were pacifists.

During World War I, the government was still using solitary confinement to break the will of political prisoners. At Funston, these four men were bayoneted, beaten, tortured, chased down, dragged by their hair, and hung by their feet into water. They were then sent to Fort Lewis, and finally Alcatraz. At Alcatraz, the four Hutterites were kept in the pitch black, wet, rat-infested basement. They were beaten before being put into the dungeon, where they were left in their underwear and strung up on the wall for the day. Given hardly any food or water, they were told they would be relieved of their torture if they simply put on their military uniforms. Believing it was not what God wanted them to do, they still refused.

This ordeal went on for thirty-six hours. When the guards tired, the four Hutterite men were left alone in "the hole" at Alcatraz for five days, with no toilet, food or water. They were then released to the regular part of the prison, then transferred to Fort Leavenworth in Kansas, where again they were put into solitary for refusal to do government work. Finally, so weakened from their ordeal, these men died, all the while never faltering in their devotion to God. Ironically, one body was sent home in a military uniform, the ultimate offense to their families. "The Hutterites staunchly endured ridicule, persecution, and malicious harassment; all of which simply strengthened their historic faith,"

(Hostetler 1983:128). Finally, the Hutterites fled to Canada, where many remain today.

Hutterites were, and still are, accused of using their colonies and religion as a front behind which to hide their economic gain. The general public believed they were menaces to democracy. At the Jamesville Colony, patriots stole 100 steer and 1,000 sheep and auctioned them off in Yankton, supposedly for money to donate to the Red Cross. Sold for a total of \$14,000, half their value, the money was never donated. Also at Jamesville, a thief was caught having stolen eighty-two gallons of wine, yet no charges were ever filed against him. The Bon Homme Colony was raided and all wine confiscated, supposedly under the Prohibition Act. Later, the wine was distributed at the Armistice Day Parade. (For full descriptions, see Hostetler, 1983.) During the migration to Canada, only the Bon Homme Colony remained in South Dakota. Some colonies would remain vacant for more than twenty years, their residents forced to flee to protect their lives and beliefs.

In Canada, the government was in search of more labor parties to work on the prairie after the War left a labor shortage. In 1917, the Canadian government promised the Hutterites military exemption and religious freedom. Hutterites began buying land in Manitoba and Alberta in 1918, but soon Canadians began to protest what they saw as unfair Hutterite land privileges. The Canadian government soon reneged on military exemption in 1919 and banned all further Hutterite immigration. Citizens also felt that the Hutterites were foreigners buying up all of the available land. Land restrictions would eventually force the Hutterites

to return back to the U. S., in search of religious freedom yet again. The Hutterites were eventually allowed to buy land in Canada again. By 1929, fifteen more colonies were founded, and by 1940 another fifty-two were formed.

When the War ended, much of the hostility did as well. However some still remains today. In the 1920s and 30s, people protested against the Hutterites' seemingly rapid expansion. They were accused of being the "wrong kind of settlers", of buying up all the best land, and the public wanted to limit their land holdings. During the 1930s, the Hutterites were seen as an asset to the Canadian government during the Depression. They bought out farmers who went bankrupt, reduced welfare, increased good farming, and paid taxes. It was during the depressed 1930s that more Hutterites began moving back to the U. S. The good will that the Hutterites had enjoyed lasted only until World War II broke out. Labeled again as conscientious objectors, they were not as badly treated as during WWI, but there was still great hostility against them.

During WWII, Hutterites were assigned to alternative service, but objectors who refused this service still went to jail. The hostility of their neighbors was still present, due to the success and expansion of the colonies, being C.O.s, and the Hutterites' refusal to be absorbed into the American way of life. Things were about to get worse, yet again, for the Hutterites. In Canada in 1942, the government of Alberta passed the "Land Sales Prohibition Act", banning the sale of land to Hutterites. This Act was replaced in 1947 with the "Communal Property Act", banning all expansion of Hutterite land holdings. Canadian farmers wanted Hutterites' land confiscated. No new colonies were allowed to settle within forty

miles of another. This Act also had a provision that said communes could not own more than 6,400 acres. Still more restrictions would be applied. The "Veterans Land Act" of 1942 said that land must be for sale sixty days before Hutterites would be allowed to buy it. Finally, the Hutterites were driven back into Montana, Washington, and Saskatchewan.

Today, all but three of the original colonies in South Dakota have filled back in since the migration from Canada. In South Dakota, a communal act was passed in 1935. Communes were given the same tax privileges as corporations, and would pay local taxes but be exempt from State and Federal taxes. This led to a new growth period until 1955, when South Dakota revoked its communal privileges. In Montana, twelve new colonies were founded in the 1940s and 50s. In the 1960s, Canada began to act more favorably towards the Hutterites, and finally in 1973 repealed the Communal Property Act. The Hutterites quickly started buying land in Canada and purchased 62,000 acres in five months. By 1975, Hutterites owned one percent of the arable land in Alberta, and by 1980, the combined populations in the U. S. and Canada were 24,326 Hutterites. (Hofer 1991:67)

II. Present Day

The Hutterites believed then and believe now that they should be left alone. Because they are pacifists, they use no violence. They have no missionaries, do not seek out converts, avoid confrontations with outsiders, are unsophisticated, want to remain separate, and desire true religious freedom.

Hutterites say "good times have never yet made good Christians". (Flint 1975:69) Perhaps this is one way in which they gain contempt from the outside; many Americans feel they too are good Christians, and yet are not so devout or "Godly" that they need to separate themselves from the rest of the world. In America, we believe that you can be a good Christian and have a good time all at once.

What else separates the Hutterites from "us"? Why do so many Americans feel the need to attack them with rumors, ethnic remarks or crime? Since our government set the example during World War I, there remains today some phobia over the Hutterites' loyalty. More than that, the Hutterites separate themselves purposefully from us. They honestly think they live a better way than we do, and they will tell you that. They say they are not capitalists, but then try to earn and save money. Moreover, while they behave just as we would in their situation, it seems that they are judged by a higher standard than the one to which we apply ourselves.

One informant, whom I will call C.E., said to me, "The Hutterites are all alcoholics; 99.9% of them are drunks. They pretend like they have no problems, but they are worse off than any other group I've ever seen. They have incest and child abuse problems. And I know them personally, I have nothing against them." Of course, it is doubtful that any population has a percentage of alcoholics near 100, so why does this informant say the Hutterites do? Interestingly, he tries to justify his biases by letting me know his personal affinity to the Hutterites. A friend of mine, referring to an acquaintance, said "he drinks the Hootie Hootch," referring to his family's heritage in Conrad, near the colonies. Hutterites, again,

are referred to as drunkards. This comments reflects on Hutterites' wine-making. A young Montana woman, whom I shall call Lisa, informed me that "the Hutterites wear aprons so they can go into the stores and steal; they put everything in their aprons and hide it. And the men choose their women by their ankles, because that's the only part the women are allowed to expose." Of course the latter is not true. The former, while it may have occurred that a Hutterite stole at one time or another, certainly does not mean that every Hutterite is a thief.

One realm in which the Hutterites and "outside Americans" differ is in the role of government. This is an election year, and every day voting and the candidates' races are played up in the media as being central to our democracy; the sure foot on which this country was founded. For the Hutterites, however, government conflicts with non-resistant and non-violent teachings. Religion should not be shaped by politics, and faith and life do not fall under political jurisdiction. Hutterites believe that the state is the opposite of love and brotherhood. "Government dilutes the Anabaptist message," (Janzen 1986:7). This causes hatred from local patriots, vets, and nationalists, or anyone who wholeheartedly supports the government and its dealings.

Hutterites are also accused of repressing their children's talents, having no cultural development, and allowing no individualism. This also goes very much against the "American Way", where we idolize those who excel in sports, music, financial gain, and all the things the Hutterites claim to not take part in. It is very difficult for us, in a very individualized and capitalistic society, to understand the idea of the commune and working to serve God and each other. Resentful

neighbors claim that the Hutterites use slave labor because they do not pay their people for work. The commune works to support itself and its members only. While capitalists regard this as unfair and illegal because we are always looking out for our own monetary gain and status, Hutterites look at it as just a part of everyday life, working to sustain the commune where they do God's work. Hutterites often ask why the "outer world" doesn't pull together the way the colonies do. They believe we could accomplish more working together than we can with an "it's mine, all mine" philosophy.

Hutterites believe that their critics are jealous because they have the best way of life. They openly criticize our way of life, and their way of life does raise questions about ours. Most non-Hutterites would be hard-pressed to work every day of their lives without getting paid, give up sports, material culture, music, clothing or technology. It is very hard for a Hutterite neighbor to see how well the commune is doing without questioning how they can possibly create so much with so little. The Hutterite way of life causes friction with the outside because it makes us question what we stand for and the way in which we live. This is very scary for people in an insecure world.

Economically, Hutterites are criticized for not contributing to their local economy. Hutterites feel that this is a truly ridiculous accusation. They believe they contribute in many ways: by setting a good Christian example, developing abandoned farms, securing a system of economy, adding new facets of culture to what they see as a stagnant society, and exemplifying courage to be what you want to be and live your life with your own strengths, ignoring those who criticize

you. Hutterites are seen as an invading minority by local farmers and ranchers, especially in rural Montana. They are criticized for increasing the population and controlling all the private lands for their own agricultural expansion. The fact is, Hutterites maintain land with 100 or so people, which previously had been inhabited by perhaps only a single farming family. (Though in some cases their land may be equal in acreage to four family farms.) This automatically creates a greater contribution to the local economy. Even if they are buying fewer types of goods, they are buying much greater quantities of what they do purchase in neighboring towns.

Assimilation is also an area of great tension. The Hutterites, wanting to remain as separate as possible, are perceived as giving off an air that says "we are better than you are" or "your way of life and society are not good enough for our children". The Hutterites have two conflicting views on assimilation. First, assimilation is a slow but sure process. The Hutterite way of life has changed over the past two decades, and many Hutterites feel some colonies have become too liberal. Second, they believe they can continue their way of life even as the *weltgeist* (or outer world) encroaches. This also is true. It is remarkable how similar they remain to their original lifestyle of 500 years ago. The trouble arises in the fact that they want to remain separate, while their neighbors want to consume them, to be able to say, "Ha! They are really just like we are!".

We have seen how the Hutterites have been treated by non-Hutterites historically in the U. S., and how it would make sense to have residual feelings left over from the last millennium. Hutterites still face many problems and

criticisms, many of which are unfounded and unfair. "The belief that Hutterites would purchase unlimited acres of land to add to their present holdings if they could or that they would exercise no voluntary restraints on either the location or pattern of settlement is unfounded." (Hostetler 1983:135) This is false for two obvious reasons. One, Hutterites only purchase land when necessary, when one colony has grown too large and needs to fission off. All of the Hutterites' land is farmed, and they would not buy land just for the sake of owning it. Second, on average, Hutterites own fifty-eight acres of land per person, while non-Hutterite farmers or ranchers average 122 acres per person. Another rumor is that the Hutterites "breed like rabbits". Truthfully, while they do grow at a healthy rate, their population growth rate is currently decreasing, and their reproduction is purposeful. "That they will eventually outnumber the rural farm population...has no empirical basis." (Ibid) The Hutterites are just successful at developing their environment, creating successful farms where others can not.

The Hutterites also suffer from hostility based in economics. This is the most volatile situation for them, the one that makes non-Hutterites the angriest. Neighboring ranchers feel that Hutterites get unfair tax breaks, even though they must comply with local tax laws and do not question the percentage of taxes they pay which are used for military support. Hutterites comply with civil law, as well as state school laws as discussed in Chapter One. The communes have experienced vandalism in the form of broken windows, thefts of tools and supplies, their animals being set free by local teenagers who face no legal consequences, armed robbery, cattle thievery, and as many as thirty hogs stolen

at one time. Some have even suffered harmful bodily attacks, such as having sugar put into their gas tanks.

The Hutterites believe that these actions are carnal, out of jealousy from the outside world, only reinforcing their suspicions of the outside world. They have come to expect such behavior from people so obviously "out of control". One would think that those living around the Hutterites would understand that they are a peaceful people, trying only to keep to themselves. "The fact that their neighbors have more information about the Hutterites does not necessarily assure they will have a more tolerant attitude toward them," (Hostetler 1983:256). In fact, it does the opposite. Any publicity the Hutterites happen to garner only seems to create more jealousy of them, especially when it comes to their successful farming and ability to make very productive use of their lands. "Today the disappearance of the family farm and its related way of life is keenly felt in rural society. In some areas where Hutterites live, they have become the target of the ranchers and farmers," (Hostetler 1983:256). People still want the Hutterites to have land restrictions, and be forced to join our world. Farmers and other American patriots are angry that some people can, and want to, opt out of our society. Hutterites are in the difficult position of being persecuted from the outside and simultaneously isolated from the inside.

Hutterites are rarely mentioned in the mass media, so the aforementioned "Dateline" airing of the segment focusing on the Hutterites near Conrad, Montana, caught much attention. What is very interesting is that rural Montana areas seem to have a large amount of rumors and lies which are told about the Hutterites.

"Dateline" listed a few, such as: Hutterite men sell themselves for stud services, Hutterites abuse their children, practice polygamy, eat their dead, murder their retarded children, and commit wife-swapping and incest. Hutterites openly say they are hurt by this bigotry and hatred towards them, and cannot understand how they create such passion, anger and jealousy.

The FBI investigated three arson fires in 1998 on the new Camrose Colony under construction near Conrad. This colony is still under construction today. The Hutterites interviewed believed this fire was all about money, as most hatred towards the Hutterites is. Perhaps outsiders do not realize that the total income of the colony must be divided by the number of members living on the colony. Farms may seem incredibly successful, but when you divide those gains by the labor of all 130 people, the amount is not great. The Hutterites are aware that people have anger towards them because of the taxation advantages they receive and know non-Hutterites see this as unfair. Hutterites make no worker's compensation or social security contributions. The Hutterites stress, however, that they also never receive any of these benefits. Their closed society accepts no social security, no government funding, no worker's compensation if they are injured on the job.

In Conrad, Montana, things got so bad between the Hutterites and the locals that the Montana Human Rights Network had to host and mediate a town hall meeting in 1998. Neighbors came together to learn about each other and their mutual concerns. Local ranchers, however, felt the meeting was unfair and one-sided because "it was held for the Hutterites and not for us". Quoted on

"Dateline" were Ron Reese, Bill Pozier, and Jerry Buckley. Even after the town hall meeting, the presence of "Dateline", and hearing the Hutterites' point of view, these men are still threatened by what they call "lack of purchases" by the Hutterites, the future of Montana becoming a "Hutterite State", and the "relentless expansion" of the Hutterites.

The relationship between Hutterites and their neighbors is a very volatile one. Hutterites will, and desire to, help their neighbors. One example of this is the great flood in North Dakota in 1995, when Hutterites helped their neighbors and the Red Cross sandbag all night long. This seems to infer a good public relationship. The problem seems to lie therein. While Hutterites want to help their neighbors, they do not want their children to end up like them. By deciding what is the right amount of contact, they offend those on the outside. Some non-Hutterites assume they are offering aid because they know a better way, or somehow feel they are superior.

Hutterites are not the elitists that outsiders believe they are. While they do, without a doubt, believe that they live a superior way of life, they do not feel that they have the market cornered on religion, so to speak. Hutterites believe that other religious people can also go to Heaven. They believe that you do not have to be a Hutterite to be a devoted religious person, but you do to be the most devoted. Hutterites also do not look down on the *weltgeist* just because they are not a part of it. Instead, while being intrigued by the outside world, they feel they cannot choose it because their Christian beliefs do not allow it. The same goes for technology. Hutterites have no problems with technology. In fact, they have

used it to their maximum advantage, they say, without losing their values. The difference lies in using what they need, and leaving the rest outside the colony boundaries.

Education also raises controversy between the Hutterites and non-Hutterites in Montana. Hutterites believe that one does not need to be educated to be good. Outsiders believe that Hutterites prevent their children from being properly educated, while Hutterites feel they educate fully the mind, body and spirit. It is true that Hutterites do not take part in their neighboring communities in order to keep their children separate. As Paul Gross notes, Hutterites believe that "education breeds error". (1965:60) What children are taught on the colony is more about their roles as adults, respect for others, the Bible, and their duties than about academics. Outside school teachers pose a threat to the Hutterites, as they influence children to leave the colony or find work on the outside. The English School is kept in its specific place. "The Scriptures can be understood without higher schooling, by obedient believing hearts," (Packull 1995:35). As children get older and reach adulthood around the age of fifteen, the English School begins to conflict more and more with Hutterite culture. The government says children must be educated until the age of sixteen, and Hutterites feel they are often sacrificing their culture for national law. Some psychological strain has resulted from children experiencing these two conflicting worlds.

The fearful argument about Hutterites being communist is an emotional one for patriotic nationalists. The colony is an effective capitalistic enterprise, even if they are not capitalists. The Hutterites do not believe they are

communists because communism failed and they succeed. The few in charge of the communist government do not really share everything equally the way the Hutterites do; communist leaders become extremely rich. It is for the reason of economic equality that Hutterites live on the colony and do not accept pay, other than what they need for daily living, for their work. This is difficult for the Montana ranchers to witness. Hutterites are their direct competition for resources, such as land and good equipment, and are seen as having unfair economic advantages. While the Hutterites are being used as a scapegoat for the hard-pressed farmer, their resolve to maintain their historic lifeways is only strengthening. They wish their neighbors would use them as an example for what to do correctly. They also state that the extreme wealth of the colonies rumored to be hidden inside is only a myth.

The rumor of inbreeding is one that can be empirically tested. To date, there have been no studies which suggest there is any scientific evidence to support the rumors of high birth defects and inbreeding on the colonies. While Hutterites are all direct descendants of a few families and still carry their names, they purposely marry outside their colony to prevent these sorts of problems, as mentioned earlier. While there admittedly remains more work to be done in this area, I have found no evidence supporting the misnomer that inbreeding is a problem for the Hutterites, nor that they have higher rates of retardation or other birth defects than the average population in this country.

Similarly, alcoholism seems to follow the same rules. Truthfully, it is likely that other populations in the U. S. have higher rates of alcoholism than the

Hutterites, and still more studies will be done in the future. The Hutterites do make and sometimes sell wine, which is served at weddings and at Communion. The reason for this is that Hutterites literally translate the Bible, and the Scriptures say that Christ made wine. Therefore, they also must make wine. The author does not deny that the Hutterites do have alcoholics among them, I am sure every population does. But it is interesting that personally I can name ten people I know to be alcoholics, yet I do not publicly state that “we” have an alcohol problem. It is the Hutterites being held to a higher standard than that to which we hold ourselves.

Hutterites suffer consequences other than vandalism and rumors in their local areas. While many have had their tires slashed and windows broken, there are other problems on the colonies. Outside cults have been known to prey on weaker Hutterite members, though some outsiders regard the Hutterites, too, as a cult. Hutterites do not believe they are cultists, and feel cults are a part of the *weltgeist*. Lies about the Hutterites, such as their non-contribution to the local economy, are only worsened by the Hutterites’ isolation. While this only strengthens their cohesion, the more self-sufficient a colony is, the more ethnocentric they appear and the poorer their local reputation becomes. Their neighbors do not like the separation, and take great offense to it. Because they have been taken advantage of in the past, Hutterites’ relationships with outsiders are guarded. While they do have friends who are outsiders, these relationships will often be limited to business relationships only.

Michael Holzach, a German man who converted to an Alberta, Canada colony for one year, says "Hutterites are a little-known and much maligned people". (1993:vii) It is widely unknown, for example, that they hold patents, such as for a duck-beheading machine. Other interesting facts include women taking both their husbands' first and last names. It is also misunderstood that, like all farmers, Hutterites use antibiotics, fertilizers and hormones. Hutterites may decide to leave the colony when they are of age, following adult baptism. Some report doing so and still being accepted by their families as Protestants, contrary to rumors which state they are disowned with no questions asked. Hutterites know that they are fragile in view of the outside world. They have a saying: the good are easily deceived. (Bach 1951:150) They believe they "are like the world, only...later in time". (Bach 1951:141)

Despite all that is good about the Hutterites, they are still suffering the consequences of bias, persecution, rumors, prejudice and racialization. They are still subjected to discriminatory law in Canada, local media attacks by small-town newspapers, and considered to be land-grabbers by their neighbors. Yet somehow, they still thrive. It is this steadfastness which creates fear, jealousy and retaliation from the outside. Their children are prepared, by example, to expect the worst from the outside world. Their experiences, now almost five centuries old, have also demanded that the Hutterites be prejudiced towards the outside world. They know that people in their vicinity and other parts of Montana say they hire outsiders to mate with, teach their children to destroy their neighbors' farming equipment, and ruin their crops by sending pigs into their

fields. While none of this is true, Hutterites also know that their refusal to assimilate makes people around them uncomfortable.

The fact is that it is still difficult to be German in North America. The World Wars are long over, but we are still afraid on some level that alien life will take over our political ideals. If there were a war tomorrow, the Hutterites would not fight for the soil upon which they reside. Is it for this reason that we label them as aliens, eccentrics, slackers, undesirables, highly suspect, Germans from the father land? Why do we exaggerate and over-generalize about a group of people who live quietly and peacefully, minding their own business? Why do we feel like the Hutterites have millions of members, instead of 30,000?

Today, Hutterites are finding it harder and harder to justify their way of life to the modern society. While brethren may privately think whatever they want, they must behave *properly*. In his discussion of intentional communities, Barry Shenker writes, "as long as norms are not openly violated, violation is acceptable". (Shenker 1986:155) Once charged (in Canada) with retarding the national spirit, today the Hutterites are given religious freedom by the state, which must remain neutral. But those residing in the periphery of the colonies feel no such pressure. Today, in the new millennium, the Hutterites are still blamed for putting shopkeepers and small farmers out of business, destroying local trade and opportunism, buying from distributors to save money, and having a religion of convenience to cover for business deals and money making.

Hutterites wonder why they are blamed for the economic problems of rural Montana instead of the urban areas which really take business away from the

small towns and farms. Their populations are higher per acre than the average farming family, and so they spend more money than a small farming family would, contributing to the local towns' economies. Yet still it is somehow feared that they will be the undoing of modernity and everything Montanans have worked so hard to build. The non-Hutterites are afraid to learn from them. The Hutterites are still persecuted today, for their religious and communal values. The next chapter will discuss further why and how this situation had arisen through a discussion of ethnicity.

C H A P T E R F O U R

∞ ETHNICITY AND RACIALIZING RELIGION: THE HUTTERITES' UNIQUE SITUATION ∞

Understanding the Hutterites' ethnicity is very important in understanding the prejudices, criticism, lies and intolerance that often surround them. Religion and economics are paramount as well. These three separate parts of life combine to create for the Hutterites a very unique situation, one that will likely never be duplicated. This chapter is an overview of what has contributed to the Hutterites' life experiences and prejudice that were discussed in previous chapters. Ethnicity, theory, language, religion, Montana's current economic situation and other factors all contribute to the lives of this interesting group of people.

Hutterites consider themselves an ethnic minority group; one that has been singled out for criticism. But what makes them a separate ethnic group, and what makes them a minority even though they are white? I discussed earlier the history surrounding the Hutterites' trek to the U. S. Returning to the era of World

Wars, people were suspicious of the Hutterites, assuming they were still loyal to Germany. Polenberg states that foreign languages bolster ethnic identification. The Hutterites spoke German and were seen as German supporters. "Ethnic loyalties had much to do with the way people responded to events abroad, particularly to the outbreak of WWII." (Polenberg 1980:39) The German success during the War had by 1940 led to fear of a Nazi "Fifth Column" existing in the U.S. The public began to get involved emotionally, and volunteered to help uncover the Nazis, much like McCarthyism was devoted to uncovering communists. Thus, we have a history of Hutterites, since 1914, being treated as foreigners in America, even though they arrived here in the 1880s. "In 1946 it had taken aliens, on the average, more than twenty-three years to become citizens," (Polenberg 1980:145). Today, the law requires only seven. Americans were completely engulfed by their fear of aliens during this time.

Besides their foreign language, Hutterites have their occupations, dress and residences to set them apart further as "different" or "not like the majority". Ethnicity, as with the common Jews-as-bankers example, is often tied to occupation in the public arena. Hutterites are all farmers. The men work with the animals and in the fields, and the women cook, clean, sew and take care of the children. There is no other option for them. They are strongly tied to their colonies, arguably more so than we could ever be tied to our neighborhoods and suburbs. This is bound to keep them from assimilating, as their space is always maintained, their language always protected, their dress is always conspicuous, and their children are always educated in the old ways.

By the 1950s, "religion was replacing nationality, language, and culture as the chief basis of social differentiation". (Polenberg 1980:146) But the Hutterites remain so distinct that all four of these classifications differentiate them from their neighbors. Ethnicity is defined not only by how a group sees itself, but also by the outside. How do non-Hutterites see them? This question is important in understanding Hutterite ethnicity. Horton discusses how social values effect and define one's understanding and way of looking at "others". In conflict theory, these social values also affect majority social control, something which the Hutterites somehow avoid almost completely in the outside world. The dominant majority employs, sometimes without even knowing it, the "strategy of a ruling group, a reification of their values and motivations, a rationalization for more effective social control". (Horton 1974:19) Society, for a conflict theorist, "is a continually contested political struggle between groups with opposing goals and world views". (Ibid) In other words, in conflict theory, it is the Hutterites versus the non-Hutterites.

For Horton, order is achieved via social organization, not by cultural integration. In other words, in conflict analysis, social relations are not measured by cultural assimilation, but by the system's class or group organization. The only way to reduce conflict in the Hutterites' case would be to meld them into a class seen as part of majority society, not by assimilating them culturally. In the Marxist vein, the majority see the Hutterites as alienated or separated from the desired state. The Hutterites, however, do not see themselves as alienated, as they do not want to be a part of the ruling majority. Horton feels the liberal Marxist would

see social problems as the failure of the dominant society to meet individual needs. The Hutterites do not feel they have social problems, except perhaps those due to the majority's prejudice. But in this example, Hutterite delinquency could easily be explained. Socialization is perceived by dominant society as a system of what is right and wrong; it creates problems in youth of minority groups who practice different values and mores. The result is juvenile problems and delinquency. It is for this reason that the Marxist will question dominant values. "The conflict theorist invariably questions the legitimacy of existing practices and values; the order theorist accepts them as standard," (Horton 1974:21).

The melting pot or plural society ideals are, in today's ethnicity theory, seen as dangerous. The fate of all minorities in this situation is "containment through socialization to dominant values". (Horton 1974:23) Like many scholars, Horton feels that the plural society is only a divided society. This notion differs from what Americans want to believe. Citizens of the U. S. often feel that living in America creates a bond of nationalism that is stronger than all else. While this may arguably be fading in recent years, this is the reason the Hutterites' loyalties were questioned during the World Wars. It is not possible to have both this perceived nation-ness and plurality at the same time. Groups that were once separate will often become assimilated or forced out, because the majority is threatened by smaller cultures within its boundaries. The term "pluralism", according to Horton, was originally meant to apply to individuals in a capitalist society to help explain survival of the fittest. It was not intended for entire ethnic groups. (Horton 1974:26)

Being a cultural minority often leads to the majority removing the group further into separatism. A good example of this is race. The Hutterites are white, using the popular notion of race as skin color, though scientists know this is not the true definition of race. Is it possible to racialize a white group into being subordinate to the white majority? Yes. History is littered with these examples, the two most obvious being Jews during Nazism and the Irish Catholics in Ireland. Interestingly, these examples are religious in nature, as are examples with the Hutterites. First, it must be explained what it means to racialize a religious group. This should be translated in the most basic sense of racism - to hold contempt, prejudice or hatred for someone because of physical characteristics. Are religions physical characteristics? Yes, as will be demonstrated in these two examples where religion turns into race.

Fenton discusses the importance of religion to people at large, explaining how it forms hard boundaries between people. It tells who is alike and who is not; it unifies and separates. It shapes how We view the Other, and it is so important in our lives, we list it right after family when talking about what we care about. (Fenton 1999:86) Religion teaches customs, values, group ties, camaraderie. Religion is a large part of ethnicity because it joins people according to what is distinct about them. Their solidarity is based on how they are different from other groups. This is how religion may come to be racialized. It is used to separate majority and minority populations.

Racialization of religion occurs usually on a political or economic front. Jenkins explains religious persecution as: "A situation in which two or more

religious groupings occupy the same territorial and social space, and the dominant grouping penalizes the religious practices of the subordinated grouping(s)". (Jenkins 1997:109) Racialization of a religious group usually starts out this way, before it becomes grossly magnified. "Prejudice is not limited to race; it also occurs when one group differs from another in religious or political views," (Ropers and Pence 1995:ix). This has occurred in Bosnia/Serbia as well. Ropers and Pence define prejudice as "irrational, negative feelings about groups of people and their members based on social stereotypes". (Ropers and Pence 1995:14) The distinction between prejudice and discrimination is that prejudice is an attitude, and discrimination is an action.

"Nazi Germany established the prototypical national policy aimed at racial, ethnic and cultural genocide in its attempt to exterminate world Jewry and other 'impure' groups," (Ropers and Pence 1995:21). Other such groups include, but are not limited to, Gypsies (or Romanescu people). So while the Holocaust was happening in Germany, in what way did it effect American views of Jewish people? Through family and school socialization, "Americans have been socialized to be prejudiced - to be suspicious of people who look, act, and have beliefs outside prevailing cultural norms and values". (Ropers and Pence 1995: 118) While Hutterites may not be religiously racialized to the extent of Jews or Irish Catholics, they certainly are labeled as a religious ethnic group and targeted because of it.

"The history of our republic is littered with gross examples of racial and ethnic prejudice and discrimination," (Ropers and Pence 1995:23). Prejudice is

institutional, it is embedded in our society through socialization. In the 1880s, years before the Holocaust, Americans became afraid of immigration. They saw it as a threat to a dominant white (and Protestant) culture. Myths of cultural inferiority, as well as public views, have affected Jews in America. Harley Erdman's *Staging the Jew* discusses how this plays out in the lives of Jews in America. Ethnicity creates a performance, or expected role, of culture that the dominant group expects to be played out as reality. Jews have been "prescribed roles as merchant, middlemen, and moneylenders". (Erdman 1997:34) In the 1840s, the verb "to Jew" was created to mean cheat or be dishonest, and was used as slang, just as Hutterites are widely accused of being "Jews". (Erdman 1997:34)

Jews were accused of financial misdealing, were denied credit, and were seen as greedy, seeking monetary gain in any way possible. They were called liars, cheaters, crooks, cheap, kikes, counterfeiters, shady and obsessed with money. It is interesting to note that all of these examples reflect an economic base, the same source Hutterite prejudice stems from. Jews, like the Hutterites, also had sexual rumors spread about them. They were called prostitutes, sexually abnormal, and it was said they sold sex for money. (Erdman 1997:36) These rumors have also been spread about Hutterites. (It would be interesting to research why sex is often the chosen topic for such prejudices.) Most importantly, Jews were seen as a threat because they possessed both "money and brains". This made them villains in the public eye. Erdman notes that how Jews "perform" in public and how they are expected to perform often conflicts.

While called piggish, slovenly, vulgar, and loud, they have been very successful. (Sowell 1981:79)

Today, Jews are seen as embodying a racial or ethnic category, not a religious one. (Sowell 1981:98) They were forced to create their own banks and law firms, because they were barred from existing ones. Still, they succeeded. Today they make up 3% of the population, have 75% higher incomes than the general public, have multiple earners in the household, and consider themselves Americans. However, they are still discriminated against in many ways. "In the ethnic perspective, patterns of victimization spread out across race. Jews, Roman Catholics, and indeed all non-WASPs have suffered discrimination from the dominant WASPs," (Webster 1992:15). The white experience is not unified. Slurs such as WETs, or white ethnic non-Protestants have been used to refer to Catholics (such as Italians) and Jews. "Racism is a state of mind that is not determined by skin color; its victims are not always black" (Webster 1992:165).

While it has been said that the Irish are the blacks of Europe, it may be said that the Hutterites are the blacks of Montana. The fact is that where there are few blacks, there must be someone to "blame" for local (economic) problems, to be prejudiced against. In this arena, America has not come very far as a society. In Ireland, Irish Catholics were seen as a separate race, and still are if you ask the Protestants who oppress them. (Ignatiev 1995:35) Catholics lived in poverty as Protestants got richer. As Ignatiev puts it, the Catholics were seen as Irish as much as the Sioux were seen as Americans. (Ignatiev 1995:36) Ireland's Penal Codes discriminated in innumerable ways against the Catholics, and

Catholics and Protestants could not, by law, mix. The Government even offered financial rewards if a Catholic became Protestant.

Starting in 1815, the Catholic Irish immigrants became America's unskilled labor force. (Ignatiev 1995:38) These are the immigrants who became the stereotypes of the Irish in America. They were uneducated and unskilled, as the result of their lives in Ireland. What was racial in Ireland became ethnic in America. (Ignatiev 1995:39) The Irish in America were forced into working with black slaves, and this led to love affairs and mulatto children. Blacks were called the "smoked Irish" (Ignatiev 1995:41), and Irish made up most of the prisons' white populations. This connection with blacks led to the public view of the Irish as blacks and vice versa. The Irish, although white, were not seen as white. They were forced to earn acceptance by the white race in America. (See Joseph O'Grady, 1973, for more information.)

Religious persecution has been documented as far back as 527 AD, and the struggle for tolerance dates back as far as Ancient Greece. The Anabaptists were the punching bag of the 1600s, but they still would not give up, as the Hutterite history details. In the United States, people have always been harassed because of their religious beliefs. "It seems Americans are never really happy unless there is some unfamiliar religious group to abuse. The spirit of theocracy lingers on." (Biermans 1986:5)

How these unfamiliar groups are viewed by the public, their community, and those on the outside is often very misleading and uninformed. "The word 'cult' is simply a derogatory term for a religion we do not understand and don't

like,” (Biermans 1986:6). These religions are often attacked for supposedly preying on weaker people. This is not to say that some groups are not guilty of this, but “charges of...brainwashing have repeatedly been made against unpopular religions”. (Biermans 1986:7) The Hutterites are no exception to this. Their members are seen as being broken, mindless, soulless, not whole in some way. Many people told me the Hutterites are “just a cult”.

The antagonism that one person feels is often easily passed down to his or her children. In other words, it lasts. The Ku Klux Klan, for example, begins “training” children as young as two. When the dominant culture attacks a religious group,

routinely, charges are made of sexual, legal and financial misconduct. The membership itself is commonly accused of sexually licentious behavior... new religions are often portrayed as a political threat because of ideology or origin in a foreign country. The(ir) process of education...of members is labeled as ‘brainwashing’ (Biermans, 1986:14).

They are also accused of being deceptive and dishonest. Biermans explains how this “cultphobia” has mistakenly adopted the term brainwashing. “The concept of ‘brainwashing’ originated as an attempt to explain what took place in prisoner-of-war camps during the Korean War.” (Biermans 1986:23) It assumes that one’s body is under physical duress and not able to function at its full capacity, comparable to a mental illness. This is a myth; it is not possible to take over someone’s healthy mind in the way this metaphor depicts.

Barry Shenker’s idea of “Intentional Communities” is an excellent way to look at the Hutterites’ religious way of life.

Communal societies appear to touch a raw nerve in our psyches, generating a gamut of reactions from, at the one extreme, vicarious admiration and sometimes naïve romantic idealism, to, at the other extreme, hopelessly ill-informed and irrational hostility (Shenker 1986:5).

Shenker defines an intentional community as a "relatively small group of people who have created a whole way of life for the attainment of certain goals". (Shenker 1986:10) In the Hutterites' case, the goals are religious. There are ten basic conditions that an intentional community must meet in order to be called such. One, it is purposely founded. Two, membership is voluntary. Three, there is an ideology of sharing. Four, members see their way as "the good life" - as an end in itself. Five, it is self-contained. Six, their lives have a moral value. Seven, goals are met collectively. Eight, the community is the authority. Nine, people are working towards collective goals, and ten, the group recognizes it is different from others. (Shenker 1986:10-11) The Hutterites meet all of these requirements.

Shenker uses a structural-functional model to analyze intentional communities, indicating that the systems function in order to allow meaning and order to define each other. The individual is a part of the system, and should be stable and feel at home in the world. (Shenker 1986:20) If an individual were to lose this identity, it would result in alienation. While intentional communities know they are not completely non-alienating, there must not be a large gap between what are declared values and what is actually practiced. This is how the Hutterites have survived for so long. The vision of the intentional community is

communality as valuable in itself. They also have the same goals and therefore good solidarity and no competition. Often, they emphasize being, not having.

While certainly not all persecuted groups are intentional communities, many intentional communities do suffer from persecution, that is often religiously based. D. Stanley Eitzen has studied similarities between minority groups in his cross-cultural comparison of Jews in Poland and Chinese in the Philippines. The Hutterites can also fit this example based on the seven basic similarities Eitzen found. First is refusal to fit into dominant culture. This is obvious here. Second, the minorities in question are often objects of commercial jealousy, as we saw was the case with the Hutterites earlier in this paper. Third, they are stereotyped by the majority as unethical and controlling, among other things. This is similar to the Jewish example already mentioned. Fourth, they are accused of avoiding laws, as the Hutterites are with regard to taxes and education. Fifth, rumors are spread about them, often by their neighbors. Sixth, they are accused of being clan-like. Finally, they are accused of having allegiance to other (their "home") countries (Eitzen 1974:120), as the Hutterites were and are. While there is variation in social, cultural, historical, and economic factors, this cross-cultural comparison works. It is important to note that in all three cases religion plays a major role and similar prejudices result.

Also in common to all three examples are the minorities' responses. Each remains segregated, seeking stability amongst themselves through strong in-group ties. All three groups educate their children in their own schools, with two curricula, one the public national standard and one in their own language and

culture. All groups reduce the assimilation process by purposely being citizens of their own communities, and only residents of the country in which they live. They remain tightly knit. The notion of being residents and not citizens is important in the Hutterite example, and something for which they are criticized. These groups assure economic security and friendship. "If he (a group member) separates from them (the group), he is on his own in an area which is rather unfriendly to members of his ethnic group," (Hunt, as cited in Eitzen, 1974:129). This is certainly the case for the Hutterian defectors.

Eitzen discusses how this creates a cycle of intolerance. It is a common phenomenon that when a minority is discriminated against, "the effect (is one) of forcing the minority group to take defensive attitudes and measures, which in turn draw increased criticism by reinforcing the stereotype of that group". (Eitzen 1974:129) It is almost inevitable then, that these groups have strong community organization and act as church, state, judge, welfare system, defense system and moral compass. This self-governance further separates the group from their neighbors and increases hostility. This close solidarity and focus on internal ties stresses tradition, teaching heritage, religion, language and culture to the youth. (Eitzen 1974:131) Groups may start out as voluntarily separated through positiveness, but become also involuntarily separated through a negative public view. "Separateness (is) proof to the members of the dominant group of the minority's lack of loyalty to the *adopted* homeland." (Eitzen 1974:135, emphasis mine)

Both groups studied, and also the Hutterites, remain mostly extropunitive. That is, they blame others outside the group for in-group behavioral problems or prejudice towards the group. This fits well into Marxist theory. The Hutterites, for example, say that prejudice is all because of jealousy, not because of anything a Hutterite did to create it. In all three cases, churches are sensitive to weakening by the Other or the outside. Business success by the minority group is attributed by the outsiders not to success or intelligence, but to illegal or fringe methods. Hutterite success is often "blamed" on the unfair advantages the government allows them. In the study, the two nations the minority groups inhabit have nationalistic attitudes, and prejudice towards minorities as a whole. I argue that the U. S. also fits these parameters and therefore the Hutterites can be studied in the same way. These anti-alien attitudes are passed to majority children through socialization, and tradition is repeated. Persecution is economic, nationalistic, religious and traditional. Importantly, in most instances, these accusations (such unfair economic advantages) are partly true.

One of the most basic, yet most effective ways of preventing assimilation is through self-education and preservation of language and cultural heritage. The Hutterites left Russia in 1874 when Russian was to become the mandatory first language of all citizens. Through coming to the United States, they have been able to maintain their Tirolean German and High German dialects. (Ripley 1976:105) The colony became a "language island" where German speakers remained isolated and used German as their first language. The larger the island is, the greater its resistance to assimilation. (Ripley 1976:127) While there are

no true islands today, the Hutterites are a large enough group that they have many speakers to learn and maintain their language. While German has died in most immigrant families, it has remained in Hutterite, Mennonite and Amish life because it is part of their faith. Especially interesting is how powerful these groups must have been to maintain their language, as German was quickly absorbed in America after the Holocaust.

Another part of language to look at is the language outsiders use to describe these minority ethnic groups. Irving Lewis Allen has found forty-three ethnic epithets for Germans, including bucket-head, cabbage-head, dummerhead, hun, Nazi, and sausage. (Allen 1983:57) He lists ninety-one for Jews alone! Ethnic epithets for Quakers include Bible-back, Jesus-screamer, and shaking-Quaker (for Shaker). (Allen 1983:65) This again clearly shows that the lines between ethnic and racial lines are blurry at best. This is also illustrated in the realm of education. It has long been a trait of colonialism to feel as though we must "lift-up" inferior races; it is the White (progressive and educated) Man's Burden. We have long felt *our* schools and religions will overcome *their* ignorance. After the Hutterites fled to Canada, Canadian officials felt they could use public education of Hutterite children to break up the colonies. Schooling is a major factor in ethnicity, and determines how children learn and are socialized. For example, public, nationally-directed schools still falsely teach that Columbus discovered America.

Immigration has created the concept of and need for assimilation. As Paul Gordon Lauren points out, the Industrial Revolution created transportation and

therefore immigration. "Newcomers always faced xenophobic suspicions toward 'foreigners' and prejudices against strange languages and customs," (Lauren 1988:37). Exclusion, he points out, is new - dating only to the late 1880s, and is a product of nationalism. Indians and blacks were seen as "unable and unwilling to adjust to the modern world" (Lauren 1988:41) and so unfit and incapable of assimilation.

Milton M. Gordon discusses three theories of assimilation. The first, and most prevalent, is the Anglo-Conformity theory. This is the desire to maintain English institutions, language and culture "as dominant and standard in American life". (Gordon 1974:264) This theory encompasses all ranges of beliefs, from moderate to extremist. The second theory is relatively outdated, as recent publications have shown. The idea of the melting pot was born in the 18th Century, and still somehow holds up as part of the American Dream. This is the notion that the true American is a mixed blood, European descendent. The melting pot ideal promised that many nations would be welcome in America, and they would all meld into a new race, all be absorbed, and all contribute to the nation. This idea that everyone can live together simply did not work, as people began to form their own separate "pools". (Gordon 1974:265)

Finally, the third theory, Cultural Pluralism, was created in the 1940s. This was based on observation, and deemed that people band together with what is familiar to them, resulting in different cultural enclaves. This was a way to explain why immigrants in New York City were not "melting" at all, but were forming Little Italy, Chinatown and the Ghetto. It was a fact before it was a theory, one that

tried to emphasize tolerance, liberalism and internationalism. This acceptance, a live-and-let-live attitude, gave the immigrant a culture all of his own. (Gordon 1974:267) As Schlesinger points out, this idea no longer works either. People under democracy are all supposed to be seen as equal. Cultural pluralism destroys this ideal, trying at once to allow American citizens be the same, yet different.

"The pot did not melt everybody, not even all the white immigrants," (Schlesinger 1992:14). In recent years, "a cult of ethnicity has arisen both among non-Anglo whites and among nonwhite minorities to denounce the idea of a melting pot, to challenge the concept of 'one people'". (Schlesinger 1992:15) Schlesinger clearly pins down the problems this creates. "The multi-ethnic dogma abandons historic purposes, replacing assimilation by fragmentation, integration by separatism," (Schlesinger 1992:16-17). In the ethnic revival of recent years, the effects have been far from unifying. Americans, though they may try to live and let live, are threatened by these pockets of ethnicity inside their private homeland. "When a vocal and visible minority pledges primary allegiance to their (religious) group...it presents a threat to the brittle bonds of national identity that hold this diverse and fractious society together," (Schlesinger 1992:113). Is our society really so fragile? By looking at ethnicity and prejudice toward ethnic or religious groups, we can see the answer is clearly yes.

Banks asserts that "new ethnicity" is the ethnicity that since the 1960s has resurged to counter the power of assimilation. Where before immigrants felt

removed from their native culture and wanted to “become Americans”, now they use boundaries to maintain that native culture. The Hutterites, having resided in the U. S. for 125 years, have fought and won this battle. Their lives are very much the same as 500 years ago. Boundaries are not only territorial, but are also occupationally based. Culture may be used to ensure labor availability through ethnicity. (Pottier 1999:72) Hutterites face no job loss or government dependency, are not welfare risks, and are not worried about the uncertainty that capitalism creates for the rest of us. They remain stable and have kept their identity intact. This creates friction with others in their community. Montana farmers feel the Hutterites have a monopoly on their occupation, due to unfair tax and labor advantages.

Religious groups in intentional communities have a “long-lasting symbol-system which powerfully orders existence, acts as fact, and seems real”. (Geertz Cited in Lessa and Vogt 1965:206) As a whole, German immigrants follow very diverse religions. Other than those from British ancestry, Germans are the largest ethnic group in America, numbering twenty-five million. (Sowell 1981:43) Many of our words, cities and products are German-named. Until 1900, “most of the farmers in America were of German ancestry”. (Sowell 1981:56) Germans, historically, lived fairly separately from their neighbors and did not mingle. The Hutterites are a small and unique portion of those immigrants.

Everyone perceives ethnicity differently. What it means to be Hutterite to a Hutterite is not the same thing as what it means to be Hutterite to a non-Hutterite. Ethnicity is ambiguous; it cannot be absolutely defined. The language

of ethnicity changes as what the public deems acceptable or politically correct changes. Who was once called an “exotic” is now called an immigrant. In ethnicity, the Self precedes the Other. Who I am categorically defines who You are. (Webster 1992:36) What seems as one race, is not. Cultural differences within the “white race”, for example, are believed to be akin to totally separate races. “The distinction between ethnicity and race collapses,” (Webster 1992:155). The Hutterites are still seen as culturally inferior, and by some as a separate race. They are not part of the majority ethnicity, so they may not be considered white. They have, in effect, been racialized, as have many non-dominant groups.

The trend in the 1950s and 60s, in the face of racism, was to categorize people by race. Since the 1970s, the new trend is ethnicity.

Ethnic oppression is conceived as two sides of a single coin of racism/nativism. It is claimed that the Euro-ethnics, or immigrants from eastern and southern Europe and their descendants, are a historically disadvantaged group within the white population (Webster 1992:165).

Discrimination against these ‘unmeltable ethnics’ is tolerated. European immigrants were seen as polluting the American race, as if there were such a thing. Perhaps, like Jews, the Hutterites’ stability, success and income pose a threat to those of us who do not feel we control our own destiny. Capitalism has us by the teeth; it has us self-doubting and self-questioning. They make up the faultline along which the American ideal of nationalism can break apart. Instead of questioning our own lives, we criticize theirs.

Another important aspect of ethnicity is the notion of public and private. The fact is, we do not know what people think privately until they publicly act on those thoughts. What is public, or situational, is not the same as what is private, or contextual. When someone says Hutterite, are they really thinking "Hootie" or "Hoot"? When someone says Black, are they really thinking "Nigger"? The FBI reported eighteen percent of 1992's hate crimes were religiously based. (Ropers and Pence 1995:15) This is twice as many as for ethnic or sexual preference biases. "Race and ethnicity hold a central place in prejudices leading to inequality, hostility and violence," (Ropers and Pence 1995:19). In the past, WASPs were the only whites accepted, and often still today other whites cannot 'pass' as WASPs. "There has long existed an ambivalence, and often hostility and violence, toward immigrant groups and immigration in general by white "natives" who are also descendants of immigrants," (Ropers and Pence 1995:266). This attitude toward immigration, originally from the 1880s, is resurfacing today.

Ethnicity is deeply impressed on everyday life. Cities are divided into ethnic neighborhoods, consisting of distinct ethnic groups. Hutterites live on colonies, religious groups often live in (often intentional) separate communities, and the Whites live in suburbia. These things have not changed in the new millennium. People often hide what they really think behind what they present to the public. What we think in private is our own business. As long as people maintain an outward air of respectability, they are perfectly satisfied with

themselves and others around them. This is the way many people go about their daily lives. But not all people worry about what is acceptable.

To be a Hutterite in Montana means to suffer all the consequences of ethnic, religious, racial, minority, and cultural biases. In a state where there have historically been extremely few blacks, where Indians are still viewed as unemployed, uneducated drunks, and where economics are at a nation-wide low, the Hutterites are the scapegoats in their communities. Their distinctive religion, devotion to God, farming success, diverse knowledge, different dress, German language, communal living and separateness almost require that this would be the case. Rumors, lies, criticisms, prejudices, and economic blame are all part of the Hutterites' lives. Still they shrug it off to jealousy, practicing the forgiveness their religion teaches.

∞ CONCLUSION ∞

This paper has discussed many topics, some admittedly all too briefly. The Hutterites are discriminated against, or at the minimum are victims of prejudice. This may oftentimes be latent, hidden in the periphery of rural farming communities, and rarely published in newspapers, magazines and other media. I am certain that I have documented the mentality that surrounds derogatory beliefs of Hutterites in these small communities, but there are few areas which I feel need elaboration.

Perlmutter explains how during slavery, Jewish merchants in Mississippi were attacked and accused of conspiring to increase prices and take over *White* farms by hiring Blacks. This is an example of hostility towards European immigrants, and of how Jews were not considered white but a minority. It is my belief that history, economics, ethnicity, religion and nationalism combine in rural Montana in a way that enables non-Hutterites to use Hutterites as scapegoats for problems. Perlmutter shows how Germans were denounced during the Red Scare, and how this discrimination forced Germans and other groups to form or reform their religious organizations. "Ethnic groups (also) often express(ed) affection for their homeland", (Perlmutter 1999:155). While the Hutterites do not

really have an affinity for their homeland, it is the perception of some Americans that they do, because they are unpatriotic.

Germans have been attacked ethnically in the U. S. for almost a century. Theodore Roosevelt said, 'the Hun within our gates masquerades in many disguises...and should be hunted down without mercy,' (as cited in Perlmutter 1999:159). Anti-Germans held lynchings, and German symbols were ridiculed across the country. (Ibid) This led to U. S. citizens asking why had immigrants not become "Americanized" or assimilated. "Why was America not first in their loyalties?" (Perlmutter 1999:161). These unpatriotic Americans of German birth or descent were feared. President Wilson declared Germans alien enemies, and Ellis Island became a prison for thousands of Germans, even if they were not really disloyal.

In 1938, Congress established the Special Committee to Investigate un-American Activities. Five million aliens were fingerprinted and registered in 1940's Alien Registration Act, believing they were threats to the government and even the Church. Then FBI Chief J. Edgar Hoover said, "Hundreds upon hundreds of foreign agents are busily engaged upon a program of peering, peeking, eavesdropping, propaganda, subversiveness, and actual sabotage," (as cited in Perlmutter 1999:185). These are some of the ways in which America's intergroup relations worsened during the World Wars.

Besides our country's history of nationalism and xenophobia, there are racial and ethnic relations issues that still today remain, and perhaps are currently becoming more and more poignant. Ong states that cultural assimilationists

believe that "racial and ethnic conflicts have resulted from changes in the racial and ethnic character of the country" and "that these changes foster linguistic and cultural separatism which could threaten 'the unity and political stability of the nation.'" (Ong 1997: 161-2) The cultural assimilationists therefore believe that if immigration were limited, so too would separatism be. This separatism is one of the points that make non-Hutterites angry with the Hutterites. This refusal to assimilate makes them somehow suspicious. Ethnic conflict makes America angry. Immigrants, or other *aliens* (emphasized to illustrate the poignancy of the term chosen) who do not assimilate create, in some views, the same problems here that they fled from in their home countries. This certainly could be applied to the Hutterites. If they were not so separate, wouldn't they be more accepted? Ong also points out there are elements of both ethnicity and class in separatism, and non-Hutterite farmers in rural Montana certainly accuse Hutterites of controlling the economy. This, in effect, makes the Hutterites a different class than non-Hutterites.

In ethnic enclaves, such as the Hutterite colony, the group is the main source of identity. Group members use a self-help political approach, taking care of their own and rejecting a national culture and a common identity. They are purposely saying "we are different from the majority". Separatism can, and does, contribute to hostility towards specific groups, resulting in inter-ethnic conflict. (Ong 1997:167) This creates a cycle: conflict becomes anti-immigrant sentiment, anti-immigrant sentiment becomes a reinforcement of separatism, and separatism creates conflict. The main problem lies within. "Assimilation requires the

dominant group to accept the immigrant group", says Ong. (Ibid) But racial and religious differences between the mainstream and the immigrants, or here Hutterites, makes acceptance difficult for the majority.

In the separatist community, "their priority is taking care of themselves, since coalition work with other communities seems to have generated few rewards". (Ong 1997:168) Add to this culture and language differences, and separatism begins to look better and better, assimilation by far the second choice. Ong poignantly states that "the combination of progress and retrenchment has fostered an environment ripe for ideological separatism". (1997:169) This is not only what keeps the Hutterites apart, but the Chinatowns, Little Italies, and Ghettos as well. To truly understand a separatist lifestyle, we must understand *why* people want and need to separate themselves and live together.

If you add all the parts together, the whole is easily explained. Racism against groups other than blacks developed during the period before and after World Wars I and II. (For a discussion of violence against Irish immigrants in the 1800s, see Steinfield's *Cracks in the Melting Pot*.) This mentality was passed down over past generations, sometimes even promoted as publicly acceptable, and separatists removed themselves from the mainstream. In the case of the Hutterites, there are also economic, cultural, linguistic, religious and local differences. Rural Montana farmers who are struggling need a scapegoat, and the obvious choice is the local Hutterites who are farming successfully. It is hard to summarize all of the factors that fell historically into place to allow the Hutterites to be recipients of local prejudices. But when language, separatism,

dress, culture, religion, economic status, history, ethnicity and nationalism are all combined, one can easily see how this has become the case.

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I would like to now make a few brief final points. First, this paper is admittedly in an all-male point of view. It is difficult to obtain women's opinions in the field of farming, ranching and agriculture, as well as on the Hutterite colonies. I will not get into gender differences about whether men are more vocal with their prejudices than women are. Another detail is about crime. While I have not written a definite rate or percentage of crime against Montana Hutterites, there are two reasons why I could not. First, the numbers were not available to me. Second, it is difficult to decipher what percentage of crime on the Hutterite colonies is just part of the median crime rate and what is intended to be maliciousness against the Hutterites. I did not want to get into the specific topic of hate crimes against the Hutterites with so little information to go on.

I am aware of how one-sided this paper is. The point of view given is almost entirely that of the non-Hutterites in the ethnographic data. This is mainly because Hutterites do not want to talk about how others feel about them. Crime, prejudice, rumors and biases all reinforce their views that the outside world is mistrustful and dangerous. They, as I said previously, simply attribute any problems that occur to jealousy. The main focus here has been non-Hutterites, how they feel, and why.

One area which I want to comment on is the wealth of information that is out there on the topic of the Hutterites in Montana. Indeed, at times I wished I

could have written many papers just to include it all. My suggestions for further research are: an ethnography of Hutterite women; an economic analysis of how Hutterites do or do not contribute to the state and local economies; a study of how, if at all, the basis for hostility toward the Hutterites has changed over the years; how distance (proximity) effects outsiders' views of Hutterites; and finally, based on R.J.'s suggestion, a prediction model of Hutterites' future land acquisition and/or population growth in Montana.

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